# TRAVELS Before THE FLOOD.

*An interesting Oriental Record of men and manners in the antidiluvian world, interpreted in Fourteen Evening Conversations between the Caliph of Bagdad & his Court.*

Translated from the Arabic.

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TO

## *THE READER.*

THE following account of theſe Travels will perhaps gratify the curioſity of many inquiſitive readers.

In the year 1638 of the Chriſtian æra, when the Turks, with the loſs of 40,000 lives, recaptured Bagdad from the Perſians, and plundered the palace of its Caliph, the original of this record was fortunately ſaved and ſecreted by an Arab, in whoſe poſſeſſion it remained till the middle of the preſent century, when, either by

A purchaſe

purchaſe or by accident, it fell into the hands of a Poliſh Jew.

The Conſul of an European power that has lately loſt its exiſtence as a nation, and groans under the yoke of three criminal and ambitious uſurpers, having afterwards bought it for a conſiderable ſum of money, ſent it to his ill-fated country, whoſe PATRIOT KING, diſdaining to wear a crown without making the natural and political rights and liberties of his ſubjects its brighteſt jewel, is ſaid to have founded on it many of thoſe ſalutary reforms which a few years ago commanded the admiration of every people that prizes freedom and independence.

If VOLNEY's *Ruins*, SWIFT's *Tale of a Tub*, and other writings of a ſimilar kind, are allowed the merit of inculcating important truths, and con-

veying inſtruction blended with entertainment; it is humbly preſumed, that the preſent work, replete with wholeſome leſſons to nations and their rulers, will equally make good its claim to public intereſt and patronage.

From theſe laudable motives, it now makes its appearance in an Engliſh dreſs; and that it may gain the ſanction of true ENGLISH FEELINGS, is the moſt fervent wiſh of

*THE EDITOR.*

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# NINTH EVENING.

*Ben Haſi.* MAHAL now found himſelf all at once in a quite ſtrange ſituation, in a quite new world. The boundleſs ocean rolling before him, the vaſt wooden caſtle which ſo ſecurely glided on it, and the buſtling of the ſeamen, ſtruck his ſenſes with a kind of aſtoniſhment hitherto unexperienced. He admired the ſtructure of the wooden machine, the ſkilful dexterity of the beings who ſteered it as they pleaſed, and repented in ſome degree of the imprecations with which he had loaded mankind.

Half way on his paſſage to the empire of Gin a violent ſtorm and hurricane aroſe. Trembling, he ſaw the ſeamen ſteer the ſhip with great compoſure and cold indifference through the roaring billows, that would now lift her mountain high, then ſink her into an abyſs. The howling of the hurricane, the vivid flaſhes of the lightning, the tremendous peals of thunder, impreſſed him with the moſt awfully-ſublime ſenſations. He forgot in this moment all he had ſuffered from men, and was proud of being one of their ſpecies. The tempeſt at laſt ſubſided, and with it his admiration of the hardy crew that had thus boldly faced and weathered it out. Having reſted themſelves from their toil, they now gave way to all kinds of exceſſes, and made Mahal the principal object of their petulance and wanton ſports.

One

One ſeaman rivalled the other in haraſſing and tormenting poor Mahal, who ſincerely prayed for another ſtorm to divert from him the attention and regards of the rude company. But he was not relieved till two days after, when ſeveral voices called out "Land! land!" The ſeamen were now too buſy with making the harbour, and anticipating the pleaſures which awaited them on ſhore, to take any farther notice of him.

They now landed him with the reſt of the paſſengers, and he ſoon ſaw himſelf in the centre of the rich and populous city of Gin. A great number of well-dreſſed inhabitants buſtled through the ſtreets, others ſtood collected in groups, and the whole place reſpired friendlineſs, confidence, polite attention and hoſpitality. Mahal,

who ſtill remembered the greedy looks of the Iradians, the horrors which they had committed at Enoch, and the ill uſage he had met with on the part of the ſailors, felt ſome conſolation at the cheerful and promiſing ſcenes before him, and exclaimed to himſelf: "This ſeems to be a good and happy people. They ſurely do not worſhip gold, which tempts mankind to the perpetration of ſuch iniquitous deeds. How mild and fraternal is their intercourſe! How tranquil and pleaſed they go about! They ſeem ſo attentive, ſo reſpectful, ſo complaiſant to one another, and embrace ſtrangers with ſuch cordiality —Yes, it muſt be a good people, that does not merit the wrath of the Lord. I doubt not but they will give me a kind reception; but I will firſt aſk, if their Sultan makes himſelf paſs for a

god;

god; for, alas! all my misfortunes ſpring from thoſe too human beings in whom I expected to ſee ſo much greatneſs, and yet found ſo little." Mahal now made up to one of the inhabitants who had juſt taken a moſt tender leave of a friend, and, with all the ſmoothneſs and refinement he was maſter of, ſaid to him, " Will you permit a ſtranger to aſk you a queſtion?"

*The Giner.* I will anſwer you a thouſand if you pleaſe, friend, without being tired.

*Mahal.* I thank you; one will do for a beginning. Pray have you a ſultan here?

*The Giner (ſmiling without raillery).* To be ſure, my dear friend: a nation can as little diſpenſe with a ſultan as the earth with the ſun.

*Mahal.* That may be ſo, and I

muſt believe your word; but tell me candidly if your ſultan calls himſelf a god?

*The Giner.* How ſhould he not be a god that reigns over gods?

*Mahal (ſtarting).* What gods? Over gods?

*The Giner.* Undoubtedly over gods! Did you drop down from the clouds, that you ſhould not recognize this dreſs, and know that ſo many as wear it, and are now upon this ſquare, are gods? What ſhould they be elſe?

Mahal long ſtared at the Giner, as if he wanted to ſearch for ſome mark of his godſhip; at length he broke out with a deep ſigh—"And why ſhould not they be any thing elſe?"

*The Giner.* Becauſe they are gods, and men dare not come in this ſquare.

*Mahal.*

*Mahal.* And why they dare not?

*The Giner.* Becauſe they are men.

*Mahal.* So you are not a man, but a god of this country?

*The Giner.* Certainly. Do not you ſee the blood-red trimmings of my garment? the flaming red croſs on my boſom?

*Mahal.* As I am not blind, I muſt ſee them; but do theſe make thee a god?

*The Giner.* No; it is only the diſtinctive mark of my being one of them. My divinity is owing to my deſcent from an ancient family called the elect, the ruling of Gin. We alone ſurround the Sultan's throne, and execute his orders. He is the ſun, we the ſtars.

*Mahal.* Are not thoſe gods who cultivate the fields?

*The Giner (ſmiling).* They are

mere men, whom we command in the Sultan's name to do all that men can and ought to do, if they wiſh to live.

*Mahal.* And what is their buſineſs?

*The Giner.* You aſk very odd queſtions, but politeneſs bids me anſwer them. They ſow, plant, trade, build, and, by the labour of their hands, produce every thing belonging to the eaſe and comfort of life.

*Mahal.* And what ſort of work have you to do?

*The Giner.* We eat, drink, and live merry and careleſs, as gods ought to do.

*Mahal.* What, without any labour or trouble?

*The Giner.* Trouble enough to rule them! Trouble enough from our infancy to be incited by the glorious

inſtinct

inſtinct of noble honour, to aſcend always one ſtep higher on a ladder where ſometimes too many of us put our feet at once together!

*Mahal.* To aſcend whither? To heaven where God dwells?

*The Giner.* To the Sultan's favour, in the gradation of the ranks which he diſtributes.

*Mahal.* Now I underſtand you, and have again learnt another new phraſe, *The glorious inſtinct of noble honour!* But tell me, how do thoſe look you call men among you?

*The Giner.* You will ſee many of them in the harbour and in the ſtreets. All thoſe who are not clad like me, you may poſitively take for men. Look, yonder is one ſneaking off along that row of houſes!

*Mahal.* What, is it he that ſo timidly

midly preſſes againſt the wall, and dares not look into this ſquare?

*The Giner.* The very ſame. The path on which they are allowed to walk around this place is only one ell wide.

*Mahal.* But don't you ſee, that that man is formed exactly like theſe here?

*The Giner.* It appears ſo from the outſide, but the divine part is within.

*Mahal.* O Sultan Pooh!

*The Giner.* What do you ſay?

*Mahal.* I am only thinking of that ſilly fool of a Sultan, who is alſo a god, and now carries vegetables to market as a beaſt of burden, and ſleeps upon ſtinking ſtraw in a ſtable, which he takes for a throne.

*The Giner.* We have heard of his misfortune: but he is no god.

*Mahal.*

*Mahal.* What, not Pooh? Were you to tell him ſo, he would as little credit you, as you would me were I to queſtion your divine origin. But tell me how many are there here of them that call themſelves gods, and how many of thoſe you count men?

*The Giner.* There are ſome hundred families of our divine claſs: as to the number of men, it can only be aſcertained by the treaſurer and the tax-gatherers.

*Mahal.* What kind of people are theſe?

*The Giner.* They are officers of ſtate, that levy on every man a fixed contribution of his property and goods, deſtined to ſupport us and the Sultan, and to defray the expences of the government.

*Mahal.* And do thoſe men ſuffer you to live in ſloth and luxury without

out reſiſtance? Do they bear thoſe burdens without complaint?

*The Giner.* Why ſhould they not? How could it be otherwiſe?

*Mahal.* But why ſhould they? Why ſhould the many toil for the few?

*The Giner.* Becauſe they are men, and we gods.

*Mahal.* Now, do you or they really fancy you are gods?

*The Giner.* Stranger, the Giner is polite and indulgent: this he owes to his gods, and his gods owe it to their Sultan. Your queſtion is very bold; beware therefore of putting it to any man in this empire. I give you this well-meant caution, leſt you ſhould rouſe the reſentment of the gods here, who are mild, kind, and forgive all but that. The preſervation of this flouriſhing ſtate, the preſervation of thoſe men themſelves, depends on that belief.

belief. Thoſe men have ſtrength, hands, and even reaſon; but of what uſe would it be if our ſpirit did not guide and direct them, and ſubdue their dangerous paſſions in ſuch a manner as to make them work and obey for our pleaſure and their own advantage? No nation in the world is richer, happier, more enlightened and politer than the Giners.

*Mahal.* And more paſſive, you ſhould have added.

*The Giner.* Why?

*Mahal.* Are they not extremely paſſive, ſince they can bear ſo many viſible gods?

*The Giner.* Through theſe gods they are become all they are, have learned all they know, and enjoy all they poſſeſs. This their gratitude will never forget.

*Mahal.*

*Mahal.* Pardon my ignorance! but I think you are only in joke.

*The Giner.* Could a God of *Gin* be capable of violating ſo far the politeneſs due to a ſtranger that honours us with a viſit? Your ill-founded ſuſpicion pains me, but I forgive you.

*Mahal.* You are very good.

*The Giner.* It is my duty. How elſe ſhould we reign over the children of men, if we were not as mild and as indulgent as we are juſt and ſevere?

*Mahal.* So you are ſevere too!

*The Giner.* Neceſſity, alas! compels us to it.

*Mahal.* Where is that neceſſity?

*The Giner.* The greater number eaſily makes itſelf formidable to the ſmaller.

*Mahal.* What ſhould gods have to fear from men?

*The Giner (very ſeriouſly and gravely).* Stranger, beware!

*Mahal.* Your earneſt ſits better on your countenance than your ſmiles; and ſhould you even become more ſerious, ſtill I ſhould believe you are only joking with me.

*The Giner.* Why?

*Mahal.* Becauſe you call yourſelf by that name, which I dare not even pronounce without offending Him who created this world and all the fools and wiſe men in it.

*The Giner.* Who is that?

*Mahal.* God.

*The Giner.* He is the Lord of ſpirits, and we are the lords of the earth we inhabit.

*Mahal.* Is not he your Lord?

*The Giner.* Yes; becauſe we are the beſt after the ſpirits who encompaſs his throne.

*Mahal.*

*Mahal.* O Adam! Father of mortals!

*The Giner.* He is not our father. Your origin is wrapt up in darkneſs. You had better be ſilent on the ſubject.

*Mahal.* I was reſolved to fly from this country as ſoon as I ſhould learn that it was governed by a Sultan who deems himſelf a ſon of the gods; but what I hear of you will make me tarry to diſcover the ſource of this ſtrange phenomenon. But I am helpleſs, and have brought nothing with me of the god of the Iradians, whom you probably may know.

*The Giner.* I do. But who, my friend, would refuſe you any ſuch act of kindneſs as giving you food and ſhelter? I am very ſorry that my houſe is not fitted up for the reception of gueſts. I tell you ſo with heartfelt

regret:

regret: but each of the gods here will be glad to make you welcome.

*Mahal.* I thank you and them. I had rather be among thoſe whom you call men; they are perhaps the more hoſpitable.

*The Giner.* I doubt it much. But ſhould you find them as you preſume, beware of aſking them ſuch ſtrange queſtions. I ſhould be ſorry to ſee you nailed on a croſs for it.

*Mahal.* What is that?

*The Giner.* The puniſhment of the daring. Behold the croſs at the entrance of this ſquare! Every one that doubts or derides our divinity muſt expire on it.

*Mahal.* Then the ſooner I am off, the better for me.

*The Giner.* A moment! Perhaps you are one of that race to whom we cannot refuſe our houſe?

*Mahal.* I am one of the deſcendants of Seth, whoſe name is Mahal. I came from the mountain, which I regret to have quitted.

*The Giner (cordially embracing him).* A deſcendant from Seth! Happy chance! Know, my friend, we gods are all deſcended from his daughters: you of courſe are related to all of us. Follow me, and make my houſe your home.

*Mahal.* I thank you. I am but a man, and will therefore firſt ſee how my equals fare here.

Ben Hafi now rolled up his manuſcript, and adjourned his narrative.

*The Caliph.* It appears to me, that your Mahal will get as badly off here, as every where elſe.

*Ben Hafi.* Why does your Highneſs fear this?

*The Caliph.* They are too ſmooth and polite to be frank and honeſt. I wiſh I may be miſtaken. So peace be with you!

# TENTH EVENING.

*Ben Haſi.* MAHAL having now entered thoſe parts of the city of Gin which were inhabited by men, ſoon found that theſe, excepting their different dreſs, were full as affable and polite as the ſelf-ſtyled gods, their ſuperiors. Our traveller, emboldened by theſe favourable appearances, immediately accoſted one of theſe plebeians to beg him for a ſupply of what he then wanted. The ſmiling Giner, making a thouſand apologies, referred him to another, the other to a third, the third to a fourth, and ſo on,

on, till Mahal at laſt grew ſo tired of ſo many unſucceſsful applications, as to begin to frown at the ſmooth-faced inhabitants. He made a laſt attempt to obtain the wiſhed-for relief by repeating his demand in a rather rough and uncouth way to a perſon whoſe appearance he thought more humane and prepoſſeſſing than that of the reſt. But the polite Giner, offended at ſo harſh an addreſs, haſtily replied: "What are you to me? What need I care if you want food and ſhelter? I have both; and that is enough."

Had Mahal been ſufficiently enlightened to penetrate into the genuine ſenſe of this anſwer, he would ſoon have found the key to the politeneſs of the Giners, and diſcovered at the ſame time, that they worſhipped a god of the ſame origin as that of the Iradians. He was however ſenſible enough to

imagine, that thoſe words were no very good omen of what he had to expect.

An elderly Giner, who ſtood very near him, and had heard the harſh reply of his countryman, gently accoſted Mahal, and aſked him, who he was, and whence he came. The latter having told him that he came from the mountain, the Giner, who was ſomewhat advanced in years, ſmiled favourably on him, ſurveyed him from head to foot, examined minutely his ſtout make, and, having curiouſly touched certain parts about his hip, aſked him: "How a man of his ſtoutneſs and appearance could be at a loſs for any thing at Gin?" He then requeſted that Mahal would immediately follow him.

The latter hardly knew what to make of his guide, of his touching and feeling

ſeeling his body in ſo uncommon a manner, and of the words he had ſpoken. He took it at laſt for a peculiar cuſtom of the country, for a new mode of ſalutation,—and accompanied the Giner, who had in a very friendly manner taken him by the hand.

He conducted him into a bagnio, ordered him to be waſhed, rubbed, anointed, dreſſed, and entertained with a light and luſcious meal, after which he begged farther to accompany him. It was now evening; the Giner entered a ſpacious and neat dwelling, and made one of the ſervants announce his arrival to the owner. The doors were ſoon opened, and Mahal ſaw before him a young blooming widow, who received him and his conductor with bluſhing encomiums. His momentary confuſion only ſerved to render him the more agreeable to his

fair hoſteſs, who by her ſignificant and amorous looks ſeemed to expreſs the pleaſure ſhe felt at his preſence. Meanwhile the Giner related to her what he knew of the man of the mountain, how he had met with him, and the manner in which he had thought proper to entertain him. The widow at length ſaid to Mahal's conductor: "I thank thee, my dear, for having remembered me ſo well. If he anſwers what his appearance promiſes, I ſwear by *myſelf*, that he ſhall not want for any thing my houſe will afford. It ſhall henceforth be my ſtudy to give him pleaſure, and his gratitude will, I hope, grant me as much in return."

She now withdrew to a corner of the apartment with the Giner, and Mahal perceived them as ſeriouſly diſcourſing with one another, as if they

they were about to ſtrike ſome important bargain. They at laſt came to an agreement, and the widow filled the Giner's hand with the god of the Iradians, whom Mahal from his heart deteſted. The former went away; and the widow fondly approached and careſſed the man of the mountain, ſaying: "My dear, I have purchaſed thee dearly of the man that is gone, but I hope not too dearly. Who can pay too great a price for a perſon that comes from the diſtant mountain, and is grown up there like a robuſt oak?"

Mahal very little comprehended the meaning of all this; but the cunning widow ſoon made the incomprehenſible comprehenſible, and a fine woman always has the ſecret power to make herſelf underſtood. His docility was great, as a ſimilar connection

was

was conſidered as meritorious and uſeful before the Flood. The patriarchs themſelves conſidered it as a virtue, though now-a-days, and under the like circumſtances, it is deemed quite the reverſe. Mahal's ſervice at the widow's was much more pleaſant than his former condition with the ſevere old taſk-maſter at Irad. The widow was perfectly ſatisfied with him, ſhe regaled his palate with the rareſt dainties; and he really led the life of the gods of Gin, which had a few moments before revolted his feelings. She even undertook to accompliſh him; and under her tuition he was taught many things which he would never have learnt by the intercourſe with his own ſex. To baniſh that irkſomeneſs which commonly attends two perſons who conſtantly live together, the widow invited parties to her houſe,

houſe, and Mahal began to be more and more reconciled to the uſages of Gin and its inhabitants; nay, he owned in his heart, that the Giners did not merit the vengeance of the Lord. The Enochers, the Iradians, and the ſhip's crew, he denounced without reſerve to divine vengeance: "But why," ſaid he, "ſhould God wiſh to deſtroy theſe fine, beneficent and well-bred people, whoſe women are ſo kind and faſcinating? They live in concord and pleaſure, and, for aught I perceive, do no harm."

In this complacent humour Mahal would ſometimes aſk the plaineſt and moſt ſimple queſtions, to the entertainment of the widow and her gueſts. But ſince ſimplicity is ſometimes too natural, refinement too ſoon cenſures it as childiſh and ſilly; and from this motive, and to keep up the

*non* of the company, the widow thought it proper to break her cohabitant of this otherwiſe amiable quality. To make a beginning of her intended inſtructions, ſhe invited to ſupper a ſelect company, from whoſe converſation Mahal ſoon collected, " That the empire of Gin was a land of friendſhip and love : that at Gin, every body, from the Sultan to the meaneſt ſubject, lived to pleaſe himſelf: that the word *Self* was the tutelar god worſhipped by the whole country: that by this means the union of the ſtate at large was the ſtronger, ſince every prudent Giner's *Self* wanted the *Self* of his neighbour to ſupply certain indiſpenſable wants. This individual *Self* guided of courſe all the actions of the Giners, who were on this account the moſt refined nation in the world, as they poſſeſſed

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the art to conceal thoſe motives of human actions in ſo fine and dexterous a manner, that in no country of the world the words ſacrifice, generoſity, diſintereſtedneſs, friendſhip, and love, were more in vogue than at Gin, though in reality they were never diſplayed, unleſs ſome raw, uncultivated being would here or there gratify the animal inſtincts of his ſimple nature: that every Giner, to ſave appearances, took thoſe words for a ſtandard of truth, to give to ſocial life a fine glittering varniſh of politeneſs and mannerlineſs; and that he who let another perceive, that he conſidered thoſe words as empty ſhow, paſſed for an unſociable being, unworthy of human intercourſe:—but that all this had no influence upon the genuine actions of the Giners, every one of whom acted contrary to

what

what he ſaid to another; and that it was rare for a Giner to aſk his fellow why he had not acted up to his word.

" Thus, for inſtance," added a ſpruce Giner, who ſeemed very eager to be the principal teacher of Mahal— " thus ſpeaks a Giner to another who ſolicits his aſſiſtance, but of whom his *Self* has nought to fear or to hope: ' I regret from the bottom of my heart, my dear friend, that I cannot be of any ſervice to you; which in plain Arabic is ſaying, What cares my *Self* for thy *Self?* My *Self* is very well, and thou canſt do it neither good nor harm.'

" Thus, the Sultan ſaith: ' I have the happineſs to reign over the Giners for their ſake!' but his heart ſays, ' I reign over the Giners for my ſake; they are my property!'

" Thus

" Thus ſay likewiſe the elevated and choſen, who environ the Sultan's throne as ſubordinate divinities."

*Mahal.* Gods! gods! How can you, that are in many other reſpects ſo reaſonable, be mad enough to take thoſe ſelf-named gods for any thing but what they really are, artful impoſtors?

The whole company turned pale, ſhuddered, and looked as timidly about the hall as if the deſtructive gods were ſtanding with flaming ſwords behind them. The fair widow frowned for the firſt time at Mahal, and cried, " Thou mad ſavage, tell me, wilt thou have me crucified with thee? If thou dareſt utter another word of the kind, dear as thou art to me, I will deliver thee up to the provoked gods; for my

my life and property are of more value to me than all the reſt."

The gueſts now conſoled her, by repreſenting, that no ſervant having been near, the converſation could not have been overheard. They then all adviſed Mahal not to ſpeak any more of the gods, whoſe bounty and generoſity were equal to their might and juſtice; who permitted every man to live as he pleaſed, to grow as rich as he could, and who allowed every thing, provided they received their due. Nobody would queſtion their being of a ſuperior nature, and all their inferiors were born to work for, and to be governed by, them.

Mahal's inſtructor at laſt ſaid to him: "It is beſt to ſay nothing at all of the gods, and neither to blame nor praiſe them. Our Grand Vizier ſays, 'I ſerve

'I ſerve the Sultan and the ſtate.' That is to ſay, What care I for ſultan or ſtate? I ſerve myſelf!"

*The Caliph.* This is no uncommon caſe, I believe, after the Flood.

*Ben Haſi.* It may be ſo here and there.—Mahal replied to his inſtructor, "Pray inform me, is not the Grand Vizier one of thoſe I ought not to mention?" "To be ſure," quoth the former; "who durſt hold an office in Gin who is not one of the elect? The fathers of all thoſe ſtateſmen and courtiers left their deſcendants their ſpirit and the power of governing Gin by inheritance; and thus the whole empire is theirs, with all that lives or grows in it. They let out the ſoil, that we may cultivate it for them. But what of this? Though we are men, we live

as merry as they, and our own *Self* is our god.

Mahal, having a long while ſilently liſtened to his inſtructor, who continued more and more to diſplay his doctrine, now put this plain queſtion to his fair widow: "If all you Giners do every thing for your own ſake, why haſt thou received me in thy houſe, as I am nothing to thee? Why doſt thou keep and feed a ſtranger thus ſumptuouſly?" The widow replied, "Becauſe thou waſt welcome to me as a man of the mountain, and as a perſon ſtronger and more ſpirited than our fine and ſoft Giners. For thy ſtrength and ſpirit thou haſt met with theſe good things; continue always to deſerve them, and I ſhall be very well ſatisfied."

"What," ſaid Mahal to himſelf, "am

" am I then only a beaſt of burthen of a different kind in this houſe, and all this is not done for my ſake? There I tilled the field of the ſevere old taſkmaſter, and here"—At this moment the widow filled his plate with dainties. " Why," interrupted ſhe, " doſt thou remain at my houſe?" " It is," anſwered Mahal, " becauſe thou haſt hired, or perhaps purchaſed me, as a beaſt of burthen."

*The Widow (provoked).* Have not I told thee, ſavage, that I paid the procurer for having brought thee hither in preference, and that I neither hired nor bought thee? I have often told thee, that thou mayeſt quit my houſe at thy pleaſure; but tell me why thou ſtayeſt notwithſtanding?

*Mahal.* Becauſe thy houſe pleaſed me till now.

*The Widow.* Why did it pleaſe thee?

*Mahal.* Becauſe I found pleaſure in it.

*The Widow.* And what did give thee that pleaſure?

*Mahal.* Thy gentle manners, thy flatteries, thy good table, with reſt, eaſe and convenience.

*The Widow.* Doſt thou not confeſs in this manner, that thou remaineſt rather for thy own ſake than for mine?

*Mahal.* I rather do: ſtill it is thou that giveſt me all this pleaſure.

*The Widow.* But ſuppoſe my beauty ſhould change into deformity, and thoſe dainties into coarſe and bad fare, what wouldeſt thou then do?

*Mahal.* Why, I think I ſhould leave thee.

*The Widow.* What makes thee then ſo provoking? Haſt thou not confeſſed that thy *Self* is thy god, as my *Self* is mine? and that thou only

abideſt

abideſt here for thy own ſake? Were I now to expoſtulate with thee becauſe thou doſt not every thing for the love of me, wouldſt thou not rail at me?

*Mahal.* I am not certain what I might do, and every thing appears indeed as thou ſayeſt; nor can I make any other anſwer than, that it is perhaps not right for me to live with thee upon ſuch a footing. I am humbled to think that mankind ſhould be in ſuch an impure connection. Perhaps this might alſo prompt me to quit thee.

*The Widow (aſide).* O the rude monſter! All poliſhing is thrown away upon him; yet, were he more refined, I might perhaps loſe by it.

*The Inſtructer.* Didſt thou ever ſee a pure connection?

*Mahal.* No where but upon the mountain.

*The Inſtructor.* It is of men I am ſpeaking, and not of animals. Thy vanity and ſelf-love are revolting againſt the truth of what we teach thee.

*Mahal.* I wiſh I were upon my mountain!

All the Giners began to laugh at theſe words; but they had loſt all farther reliſh for feaſting, and the whole company broke up ſoon after.

Before Mahal's arrival at Gin, the fair widow had been in a very human connection with one of the gods of the country, in conſequence of which the former was turned out of her houſe. This god happening to bring upon himſelf the Sultan's diſgrace, was ordered to the frontiers of the empire,

empire, where a conſiderable charge was given him; but the united corps of the gods never ſuffering one of their ſpecies to languiſh long under the diſpleaſure of their chief, he was recalled unknown to the fair widow. He ſuddenly appeared before her, found her alone with the ſon of man Mahal, and in a ſtate which provoked his jealouſy. Reproaching the widow, therefore, in a gentle manner with her unkindneſs, he commanded Mahal with a contemptuous frown to be gone. The rude mountaineer would not ſtir; words enſued, and Mahal plainly told the courtier: "Only try thy godſhip with my manhood, and we 'll ſoon ſee who ſhall be maſter of the field." The polite god would not deign to condeſcend ſo low, and went away in a pet. Now the fair widow wrung her

hands in deſpair, pulled out her long and fair hair, and loaded Mahal with the bittereſt imprecations. The latter, quite ſurpriſed at this ſudden change, could not forbear aſking what had occaſioned it. "Thou monſter, thou mountain beaſt," replied ſhe, "canſt thou aſk ſtill? How could thy duſt dare to offend one of the ſublime gods of the country, who has honoured me in preference to all the daughters of men, with forgetting his godſhip at my houſe, at leaſt for ſome hours? Thou ſhouldſt have bent and humbled thyſelf at his appearance, and in thy immediate retreat I would ſoon have found means to appeaſe his reſentment. Am I to periſh for thy ſake? Fly, leſt thou art found here, and thus expoſe me likewiſe to being nailed to the croſs, which thou wilt not eſcape."

The

The obſtinate Mahal would not move an inch; the embittered widow, trembling with fear, called together her people, who turned out the ſtruggling mountaineer. For a while he kept ſtanding before the widow's dwelling, foaming with rage; but before he had time to reflect diſpaſſionately upon what had paſſed, a body of armed men, headed by the incenſed god, ſeized, and ſecured him in a priſon. That night Mahal made a very bad panegyric upon the Giners, and upon men in general. At day-break he was brought before the tribunal conſiſting of gods, who had predetermined to condemn him as ſoon as he ſhould make his appearance. He was received in due polite form; his crime was repreſented in the blackeſt hue, though without any terms of harſhneſs or opprobrium; and

and the chief or preſident of the gods expreſſed his heartfelt ſorrow at the neceſſity he was under of pronouncing the ſentence of crucifixion upon him, having previouſly aſked him if there was aught he wiſhed to ſay in his defence?

Mahal, quite at a loſs what to ſay, thought it would be the beſt way for him to relate his hiſtory, and to mention at laſt his miſſion from the Lord, which probably would ſtrike his enemies with awe. He did not however go quite ſo far; and at the very mention of his being a deſcendant of Seth, the countenances of all preſent began to brighten up, and the judge, preſident, or chief cadi, thus ſpoke: "Son of Seth, far be it from us to condemn one of our equals: you are one of us, becauſe we are all the offſpring of the ſons and daughters of

Seth.

Seth. Certain as it is that no common man in Gin durſt venture to offend one of the gods, it is not leſs evident that you muſt be one of the divine number! We are all highly ſatisfied with the happy iſſue of an affair otherwiſe ſo diſagreeable to us."

Here the preſident and all the gods, not excepting the accuſer himſelf, embraced Mahal, who began to be of opinion, that it would be better to owe his life to their folly than to riſk it by expoſing their madneſs.

*The Cadi.* Let this event be inſtantly proclaimed throughout Gin, that the people may ſee that none of them has been capable of offending us. Our welfare and exiſtence depend on this opinion. As to this ſon of Seth, our brother here, we will introduce him to the Sultan, and

inſcribe his name in the liſt of the gods.

Mahal being taken into another apartment, and ſtripped of his coarſe garments, they put on him a white robe trimmed with blood-red ſilk, and a red flaming croſs on the breaſt, placed him in their centre, and proceeded to the Sultan's palace. Mahal muttered to himſelf, "Theſe gods are leſs wicked than they are mad; what ſhall I do among them? Yeſterday a well fed beaſt of burthen in the ſervice of a fair widow, who had me turned out of her houſe becauſe I offended one of theſe fools; to-day I am one of them myſelf: but what will become of me, or what muſt I do to avoid this compulſion? Ought I now to be a fool with fools, or to tear this ignominious dreſs, and be nailed alive on yonder high croſs? Ah,

Lord

Lord, what are men? What can ail them? What ſhall I do among them? Why did I mix with them? My experience increaſes daily; but thoſe things I experience being ſo uſeleſs and bad, my mind grows darker inſtead of being enlightened. Alas! I only learn words; and the greater the quantity I learn, the more remote is their true ſenſe from my mind."

The gods now preſented Mahal to Sultan Lom, the ſupreme ruler of the Giners, and ranged themſelves proudly around his glittering throne. The grand and ſublime idea which our ſtranger had formed to himſelf of the mighty of the earth while he was ſtill on the mountain, had by this time been ſenſibly diminiſhed by his experience; he was therefore glad to ſee a man before him, whoſe ſoft yet dignified affability and harmonious voice

voice made a more agreeable impreſſion upon his heart than the whole throng of courtiers. "What a pity," whiſpered he to himſelf, "that this man will not be called that which he ſo kindly and fairly repreſents!"

The gods having ſtated to his Highneſs, that the divine deſcendant of Seth was houſeleſs and breadleſs, Sultan Lom immediately aſſigned a diſtrict of land to Mahal, who, having been made one of the gods of the country, lived like the reſt of his colleagues from the ſweat of the people of Gin, whoſe humanity obliged them to till and cultivate the piece of land which the Sultan had ſpared him out of his own domains. Notwithſtanding all theſe bluſhing honours, he was not ſo preſumptuous as to believe himſelf to be more than any other poor mortal. He often recol-

lected

lected the converſations that had paſſed at the widow's, and how his ſpirit was obliged to brook the ſuperior politeneſs and ſmoothneſs of the gueſts. He ſaw his fellow gods commit ſuch human acts as often tempted him to tear his white *caftan*, and call their godſhips a ſet of pitiful and impoſing ſcoundrels. Nothing but the lofty croſs which he daily ſaw before his eyes damped his riſing paſſion; and thoſe emblems of terror are indeed very apt ſometimes to cool the moſt patriotic enthuſiaſm.

Sultan Lom requeſted Mahal one day to favour him with the narrative of his adventures; and however dull your Highneſs has found it in my mouth, yet it produced ſo powerful an effect upon Lom, that from that moment he made him reſide at his palace, and gave him a charge which

in

in dignity bordered very near upon his own.

*The Grand Vizier.* I do not believe it.

*The Caliph.* But I do; and why ſhould I not? Yet I wiſh to know why this wiſe ſultan thought your Mahal worthy of ſuch diſtinguiſhed favour.

*The Grand Vizier (to himſelf).* It is a mere fiction and a lie, and one may eaſily ſee what it tends to; but we will ſoon take care of that.

*Ben Haſi.* I did not call Sultan Lom a wiſe man; ſtill it may be ſo. Mahal does not point out in what manner he operated ſo forcibly upon Lom, and his ſtory muſt doubtleſs have produced this effect. If your Highneſs pleaſes, I will tell you my ſecret ſuppoſitions upon this point.

*The Caliph.* Thou haſt me in thy power,

power, and my pledged word is as ſacred to me as an oath taken upon the book of books.

*Ben Haſi (bowing).* Mahal, dread Lord, ſpoke with ſarcaſtic bitterneſs of the Sultans Pooh and Zobar, and plainly declared, that their criminal madneſs proved to a demonſtration that mankind were ripe for the deſtruction with which the Almighty threatened them. Sultan Lom requeſted him to explain; and though he found the ſentence of proſcription upon the whole race of men ſomewhat ſevere, yet he conſidered it as juſter than Mahal; which made the latter marvel. Lom hearing at laſt, that Mahal was to return to the old mountain to make his report to the incenſed Governor of the Univerſe of what he had heard and ſeen, he thought it a ſtroke of good policy to

ſhow himſelf to a man of ſuch an important calling, in a manner which was moſt likely to induce him to aſſign him a better part in his record, than that of the peeviſh Pooh, or of the wild and ſanguinary Zobar.

*The Caliph.* I ſhould not have received him better for all that. The Prophet ſays, "*God will on the laſt day open every one's book, in which all our thoughts and deeds are recorded, beſides all we have either publicly or privately ſaid or done. Then every ſoul ſhall anſwer for itſelf, and every one ſhall be requited for the evil he has committed, and nobody's ſoul ſhall ſuffer wrongfully!*"

*Ben Haſi.* Sultan Lom, being unacquainted with the Koran, and deeming himſelf a god, wiſhed nevertheleſs to be favourably mentioned in Mahal's record. Whether Mahal

gueſſed

gueſſed his very human views, I cannot tell: but our mountaineer's report of this ruler is thus far very advantageous; and by the hieroglyphics at this identical part of his travels, Mahal thus literally expreſſes himſelf:

"Sultan Lom had a finer underſtanding than all thoſe that ſurrounded his throne, executed his commands, and governed the land in his name. He thought and ſaid many excellent things, and expreſſed himſelf ſo humanely good and great, as to make me oftentimes ſtand before him loſt in aſtoniſhment—He was, farther, gentle and liberal; and the only thing I have to regret is, that I never ſaw him practiſe one of the grand, excellent and ſublime things which were conſtantly in his mouth."

*The Caliph.* Aye, aye; he was only

a braggadocio: and great talkers do the leaſt, you ſee.

*Ben Haſi.* Mahal thus continues:

"The gods of the country had from Lom's earlieſt infancy taken care to render him ſo diffident of his own clear reaſon, as to make him ſubmit to all they wiſhed, however contrary to his own will.

*The Caliph.* By the Prophet! I am exactly under the ſame predicament; and whenever I hit on ſomething good or uſeful, they hum about me like a ſwarm of hornets to diſſuade me from it. One talks of danger to my perſon and to the ſtate, another of the violation of ancient and venerable uſages, a third of impracticability, and a fourth of the great miſchiefs which may reſult from ſuppreſſing a ſmall evil. Then all add, how prejudicial

it

it would be for a monarch to revoke orders once given. They load me with praiſes, and with the choiceſt expreſſions conclude, ſighing: What a pity it was, that ſo gracious a ſovereign did not reign over a nation ſufficiently worthy and ſuſceptible of enjoying the bleſſings of his intended mild government! To hear them, one would be tempted to believe that a monarch was not made to do good, but only evil; and that men are ſo depraved, that nothing but violence, force and terror can keep them under.

The Grand Vizier had liſtened with great attention to all Ben Hafi ſaid, and during the Caliph's reply he looked ſteadfaſt and demure on the ground. But immediately after his maſter had done, he had aſſurance enough to look firmly around.

*Ben Hafi.* In a private interview,

your Highneſs was once pleaſed to aſk me, how it came, that the Viziers were ſo prompt to obey any fooliſh or bad commands of their monarchs, and why ſo ſlow and ſupine in executing what was good or uſeful. Your Highneſs has now anſwered this queſtion.

*The Caliph.* Ben Hafi, thou haſt agreeably ſurpriſed me; and for this I'll give thee an hundred golden *derhems.*

*The Grand Vizier.* I cannot ſay he has ſurpriſed me. Such things may perhaps have been before the Flood, but in our days they are unheard-of.

*The Caliph.* And why ſhould it be unheard-of ſince the Flood? Matters are very much managed in this manner at my court; and if my Divan is not like that of the Sultan of Gin, it is ſurely not your fault.

*The*

*The Grand Vizier.* It is impoſſible; and if your Highneſs will give me leave, I will clearly prove it to you.

*The Caliph.* I don't wiſh to hear your proofs; for you always twiſt your arguments ſo as to be in the right at laſt, were you ever ſo much in the wrong.

*The Grand Vizier.* I love to ſee your Highneſs in good humour, and am ſilent.

*The Caliph.* You will do well to ſay no more. I remember a fable which my truſty eunuch *Maſul* often told me in my infancy, and its remembrance gives me pleaſure. "A young warrior," ſaid he, "ranged with his bow bent through the fields, to practiſe himſelf in ſhooting. There ſat a raven and a dove perc hing on a tree. The raven ſaid to the dove: 'I will ſhow this man, ſo proud of his voice, that

we birds have a voice too, and can ſpeak rationally and intelligibly.' At theſe words he hopped down on a leafleſs and withered branch, and began to croak. The young warrior let fly his arrow, and down fell ſilly Ra'ph ſtone dead. The frightened dove, ſoaring through the air, exclaimed: 'Wretched chatterer! How often is he the wiſeſt that is ſilent!' "

*The Grand Vizier.* Mark this good leſſon, Ben Hafi.

*Ben Hafi.* When the ſage invents a fable, he makes both the great and the little his audience.

*The Caliph.* And the great ought to be the more attentive, ſince their follies may prove more hurtful to the multitude.

*Ben Hafi.* I thank your Highneſs for the hundred *derhems*; and that I may not remain in arrears, pleaſe to liſten

liſten to me farther. But recollect, it is Mahal, not I, that ſpeaks:

" Thus miniſters, by making monarchs diffident of their underſtanding, annihilate their will, and with it the very faculty of willing; and the beſt ruler is found to act like a blockhead or an idiot, becauſe he is bereft of thoſe ineſtimable qualities.—You will perhaps think, Lord of Believers, that Mahal all at once ſpeaks as a man of experience and of the world, and that it probably is owing to the *caftan* he wears. You know that from a man's garment much is augured in favour of his underſtanding. Otherwiſe I cannot comprehend it myſelf, unleſs one of the gods ſhould have taken the trouble of teaching him. Be as it will, he ſoon diſcovered that the good and wiſe Sultan Lom was ſo much ſwayed by the gods around his

throne, who outwardly admired and worſhipped him, as to have no power left him but that of moving in the magic circle which they had drawn about his perſon, and of giving ſuch orders as they wiſhed, without caring whether they were good or bad, ſalutary or grievous to thoſe whom they concerned. Sultan Lom had too much penetration not to diſcern what they aimed at by the artful play wherewith they tricked both him and thoſe whom they contemptuouſly called beaſts and men: and ſo convinced too was he of the impoſture of his or their being gods, that he would fain have put an end to the farce, and ruled over all the Giners as man."

*The Caliph.* And why did not he do it?

*Ben Hafi.* Not becauſe he wanted underſtanding, but becauſe he lacked will and firm reſolution. This will

the men of the mountain wanted to rouſe in him, and he addreſſed him thus:

"Sultan Lom, you have imparted to me all your ſorrows, and I, the faithful adorer of the only true God, before whom we are all duſt, eagerly ſeize this opportunity to make you a true ruler of the Giners, to convert both them and you from this ſhameful idolatry. Only will firmly, and it ſhall be done. There are ſeveral ways to rid you of the yoke of thoſe ſelf-ſtyled gods. Chooſe one of them. The moſt ſimple method would be for you to ſhow yourſelf in the excellence of your manly nature, as a man tired of their groſs deceptions; but whether this ſimpleſt method be alſo the ſafeſt and moſt prudent, I muſt leave to your own reflection. A more artful one would be, if you promot-

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ed as many of thoſe whom they call human beaſts to the rank of gods, that it would not be worth while having ſuch a title, and that every one of that privileged caſt who wiſhed for a decent ſubſiſtence, would be forced to take up ſome other occupation to procure it. Or ſummon all the inhabitants of Gin, who are thouſands in number to one of thoſe gods, to aſſemble at an appointed day in your palace, and roundly tell them your reſolution of delivering them from the tyranny of thoſe overbearing uſurpers. Be aſſured, that the Giners, who feel the hardſhip of feeding and keeping thoſe lazy wretches, will joyfully aſſent to their deſerved degradation. Then you will be able to execute all thoſe fine and excellent things which you ſo often talk of."

*The Caliph.* I ſhall be glad to hear that

that this plan ſucceeded; but I much doubt it.

*The Grand Vizier (muttering).* It can't and ſhan't ſucceed.

*Ben Haſi.* Sultan Lom, highly pleaſed with Mahal's propoſal, weighed it in his heart by the experience he had had of thoſe gods, and felt himſelf much agitated and embarraſſed at the idea of putting it into execution.

*The Caliph.* I am ſorry for him, but I thought it would be ſo.

*The Grand Vizier (to himſelf).* And ſo did I.

*Ben Haſi.* He gradually poliſhed the roughneſs of Mahal's ſcheme, and, diveſting it of its ſeverity and boldneſs, made it like every other medium. He wanted to proceed ſtep by ſtep, and this ſo wiſely, that he might either recede from or palliate his conduct. He now made the firſt important

important ſtep, and the gods took umbrage without letting him perceive it. At the ſecond ſtep they praiſed him; at the third they were mute; and before he could make the fourth, Mahal was ſtabbed with a dagger in the palace, not far from Lom's throne, and ſunk ſenſeleſs to the ground.

When Mahal recovered from his ſwoon, he ſaw himſelf in a ſtrange houſe, in the hands of the ſurgeons, who dreſſed his wound with great reverence. None of the by-ſtanders or attendants would ſpeak to him, or anſwer any of his queſtions. In this condition he remained for ſeveral months; and on his entire convaleſcence he roſe to go to the Sultan, when one of the gods intercepted him on his way, and brought him the following meſſage in the Sultan's name:

"The

"The moſt illuſtrious Lom heartily regrets the unfortunate accident you have met with, and has given a ſevere reprimand to the god who wounded you ſo cloſely to his auguſt perſon. He adviſes you, for the ſake of your future ſafety, to quit the country immediately in one of the ſhips that lie in the harbour ready to ſail. His ſupreme Highneſs is very glad that you did not die of the wound you received, and aſſures you, as a true deſcendant of Seth, of all his eſteem."

Mahal was going to reply, when the deputed god interrupted him, ſaying: "My dear friend, you had better ſay nothing. Both the Sultan and we would be ſorry to ſee ourſelves under the neceſſity of condemning one of our own claſs to the ignominious death of crucifixion."

Here the Giner very genteelly put a bag

a bag of gold into Mahal's hands; but the latter ſcornfully threw it at the courtier's feet, rent the caftan he had on in an hundred pieces, and aſked for a human dreſs. The ſupple courtier, lamenting Mahal's doing ſo little honour to his ſuperior nature, granted him his demand, and gave orders to carry him immediately on ſhip-board.

This will convince you, Lord of Believers, how dangerous it is to point out the foibles of monarchs, and what reward one has to expect for it.

Here Ben Hafi rolled up the manuſcript.

*The Caliph.* Had it been my caſe, I would have acted more gratefully and honourably. I always thought that poor Mahal would never thrive among thoſe fawning Giners. I dare ſay, he will henceforth be more circumſpect at courts.

ELE-

## ELEVENTH EVENING.

*Ben Hafi.* MAHAL, ſeeing himſelf in ſafety, thus ſilently murmured: "So, the ſhrewd Sultan Lom thinks a reprimand a puniſhment ſufficiently ſevere for an aſſaſſin that had like to have murdered me with a dagger! The preſumptuous throng has doubtleſs perceived, that I wanted to make Lom a man and a real chief over their threatened godſhips; and the diffident and fine-talking fool thought it beſt to let me fall a ſacrifice to his own ſafety, and thus to remain, what he has always been, a poor, pitiful

fool of fools, bound in golden chains into the bargain! What ſhall I ſay to all this? The puny Pooh and my fair and infamous daughter Milka wanted to have me emaſculated, becauſe I upbraided them with their madneſs and profligacy. The ſavage Zobar drove me away as an idiot for refuſing to take part of the miſchievous god of the Iradians: and theſe ſelf-conceited gods of Gin attempted to diſpatch me with a dagger, and Lom lets the guilty go unpuniſhed, becauſe I wanted to reſtore humanity and the true God to that degenerate country. Thus every new experience becomes a new ſorrow, and every addition of knowledge an addition of pain. The ſcar of the wound on my boſom, and ſome new-learned words, which are likewiſe mere marks in my brain, is all I take with me from Gin.

O Lord,

O Lord, what ſhall I have to ſay before thee in my own praiſe, or in that of mankind? O my mountain! O my ſweet ſleep! O my happy ignorance!"

Mahal, afraid of being again made the ſcoff and laughing-ſtock of the petulant crew, had wiſely retired below deck, where he ſoon collected ſo rich a ſtore of meditation, that nothing in the courſe of the voyage could divert his attention, and he was quite inſenſible to the wind's rage and the billows' roar. Like a travelling philoſopher, that ſets out in purſuit of the knowledge of man, and wiſely begins abroad, he did not care where the ſhip might caſt anchor, being convinced, that wherever wind and waves toſſed her, he would be ſure to find fools, provided the country was inhabited. Mahal might already have found this in his own perſon on the

mountain. It was alſo very ſingular, that, notwithſtanding all he would at times ſay or experience, he did not feel any ſolicitude to return to Noah's abode. He found himſelf actuated by an ungovernable deſire of viewing the vaſt ſcene, of learning more and more, and of obſerving every thing philoſophically. He cheriſhed hopes of diſcovering at laſt whether the malign influence in man originated from himſelf, or from him who had organized him to be ſuch as he was, and who now threatened him with deſtruction. Thus he experienced what all the explorers of the human mind and life, and of the incomprehenſible phenomena in the phyſical and moral world, daily experience. He felt his incompetency, complained of himſelf and of his God, and heaped confuſion upon confuſion.

O bleſt

O bleſt ſimplicity! thou balm of life!

Still loſt in thought, Mahal continued in this ſolitary mood, till the ſhip approached the ſhores of the empire of *Farak*. The ſun was ſhedding forth his golden rays, and brightening the face of all nature, when our traveller landed before the city of Farak, encompaſſed with ditches, towers and walls; and waited till its ſtrong iron gates were opened. At his entrance he gave the uſual account of himſelf, and, being permitted to penetrate farther into the place, was aſtoniſhed at finding nothing but clear and tranſparent houſes, which ſeemed to form ever ſo many rows or ſtreets of huge lanterns. He could plainly ſee the citizens of Farak in bed with their wives, and diſtinguiſh all that went forward in thoſe ſtrange dwellings.

*The Caliph.* Let me tell thee, Ben Hafi, what I think of the matter. I believe thy Mahal has ultimately found here a good, pious and excellent ſet of people, whoſe actions were ſo blameleſs, that they felt no ſcruple to expoſe them in the light of day. Happy the country whoſe citizens have brought it ſo far in morality and piety, as to let a whole city witneſs the actions of every individual!

*Ben Hafi.* Every word ſpoke, or even whiſpered, could alſo be heard on the outſide of each houſe. Mahal was ſurpriſed at ſeeing a number of men at the doors of the reſpective houſes, applying their ears to a ſmall aperture, liſtening very attentively, and writing down certain ſigns upon tables. Theſe liſteners wore fine parti-coloured cloaks reaching down to their heels, and hoods on their heads.

Mahal,

Mahal, to imitate them, put his ear to an aperture of a houſe, and heard a ſoft whiſpering. Unaccuſtomed to the buſineſs, he did not immediately comprehend what the whiſpering meant, and was juſt going to liſten again with redoubled attention, when one of the other liſteners, pulling him by his left ear, aſked him for the ſign which qualified him for this new office. Mahal having no ſuch ſign to produce, the man bade him follow him. He led him through a very broad and long ſtreet, all the houſes of which were ſtrongly walled, and quite the reverſe of the lanterns. They ſtopped before a large edifice, and Mahal's guide ſaid: "Here lives our chief, the firſt Gomer in Farak."

This word, as Mahal explains it, has three different ſignifications, which it gradually obtained, in good or bad times.

times. You well know, that the words which men uſe, like them, grow better or worſe. The firſt ſignification was the primitive, denoting the thing or object. The ſecond was figurative, or perverted. The third, the wholly dignified or ſublime. In the hiſtory of words you will at the ſame time find the hiſtory of thoſe men or things which they denoted. Agreeably to the firſt primitive meaning, the word Gomer ſignified a man who lives on the ſigns of words. The figurative or perverted ſenſe denotes a man that uſureth the truth and ſells it, or a liar with a glib tongue. The third and dignified conſtruction of the word implies a *bookmaker* or an *author*; and of this word I ſhall make uſe, according to Mahal's record, when ſpeaking of the Gomers of Farak.

They found the chief of the go-

mers or authors in a ſpacious hall, whoſe walls were lined with boards, on which a great number of manuſcripts was ranged. It is a pity that the Flood has ſwept them away, ſince books are ſo very *ſcarce* in our times!

Mahal's guide, who ſeemed to be a ſubordinate writer, whiſpered ſomething into the ear of the ſerious and grave chief of his tribe, who, turning to Mahal, aſked him: "How couldſt thou, unhappy wretch, interfere in the office of the ſages of Farak, and liſten at the door of one of our citizens' houſes?"

*Mahal.* I neither know the ſages nor the fools of this country. I arrived this morning before your city: they permitted me to enter it: I ſaw a man lean with his ear againſt the hole of a door, and followed his example, in hopes

hopes to learn ſomething worth know-ing.

Our mountaineer now began to re-late the firſt part of his ſtory, when the chief Gomer, interrupting him, ſaid: "Never apply your ear again to the doors of the Farakers. Go through the ſtreets without looking into the houſes; for this is only allowed to thoſe whom you ſee dreſt like me and this ſage here, and who can give the ſecret ſignal. We pardon for this once thy ignorance; and ſince thou art come from ſuch a remote country, I will preſent thee to the mighty and great Sultan of the Farakers. Bow thrice down to the ground before him, and relate all that happened to thee at Farak. Perhaps he will ſmile, and then thy fortune is made. But above all things forget not to bow thrice to the ground,

ground, and put one finger on thy lips, till he bid thee ſpeak.

*Mahal.* Pray be ſo kind as to inform me, if the mighty Sultan of the Farakers takes himſelf alſo for a god, becauſe I am rather afraid of thoſe human deities.

*The Chief of the Gomers (ſmiling).* I apprehend thou comeſt from Gin, the country of fools and impoſtors?

*Mahal.* I do; and thou haſt given them the name which they juſtly deſerve.

*The Chief.* Thou art now in the country of the ſages, who by their wit and the ſpirit of their works have eradicated all folly. If you appreciate the mighty Sultan of the Farakers by his power, he may be conſidered as a god, ſince he can deal good or evil wherever our ſages find it convenient to be dealt. In other reſpects he is a

man

man like me and thee, and has too much ſenſe to think himſelf more.

*Mabal.* Since this is the caſe, introduce me to him, for I can aſſure thee he is the firſt perſon I have found upon a throne who did not take himſelf for a being of a ſuperior nature. This prepoſſeſſes me much in his favour.

*The Chief.* You cannot think too highly of his grandeur, and he will excel every idea you may form of him; for he is the firſt Sultan entirely formed and accompliſhed by the Gomers!

Here the Chief deſired Mahal to withdraw, when his guide brought him into another room, where he was profuſely and ſumptuouſly entertained. This little circumſtance ſerved farther to inſinuate the Gomers, the Sultan and the Farakers into his favour.

The

The Chief of the Gomers repaired to the palace, attended by a numerous retinue of parti-coloured cloaks; and Mahal, agreeably to the ſecret inſtructions given him, ſtared ſtraight forwards, looking neither on one ſide nor the other, except a few ſquinting glances he caſt on the parti-coloured cloaks, who were right and left prying into the tranſparent dwellings. They ſoon entered the vaſt palace, whoſe height and breadth were almoſt out of the eye's reach. The guards and ſervants made a profound obeiſance to the Chief of the Gomers, who led his ſuite into a beautiful, moſt extenſive, high and wide hall, which, like the palace, ſeemed to have been built for ſuch beings as Mahal on the mountain once fancied he ſhould find in the mighty men of the earth. At the farther end of this vaſt hall ſat

Komar,

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Komar,

Komar, the Sultan of Farak, at the very ſight of whom our ingenuous mountaineer uttered a loud exclamation of ſurpriſe and aſtoniſhment.

*The Caliph.* Ah! the ſilly chap will never leave off his old tricks.

*Ben Haſi.* Sultan Komar was neither an object of ſurpriſe nor aſtoniſhment. At beſt, he would have excited an almoſt imperceptible ſmile in the countenance of a well-bred man; for this mighty and grand perſonage of a Sultan was only a little dwarf, not much above three feet high, ſplendidly dreſſed out, wearing a large and ſumptuous crown on his head, and repoſing his right foot on a big globe, on which appeared the figure of the earth, wrought in gold. Though his face was full of wrinkles, yet he looked very majeſtic; and, little as he was, ſurveyed the whole throng

with

with a ſtern aſpect, and between whiles ſtroked his long and thin beard. In his right, he held a long ſtaff, and Mahal's exclamation ſomewhat diſconcerted the ſolemnity of the preſentation. The Sultan ſtared at the rude mountaineer with an indignant eye, when the Chief of the Gomers, walking up to him, kiſſed his Highneſs's beard, and reſpectfully whiſpered ſomething which made the dwarf look rather pleaſant. The Chief then took ſeveral rolls from his ſubordinate Gomers, and read to the Sultan in a low tone of voice what the liſteners had heard and ſeen, which ſeemed very much to gratify the dwarfiſh ruler. Mahal was then ordered to come forth; and having made three low reverences and laid his fingers on his lips, the Sultan beckoned him with his long ſtaff to

ſpeak, relating firſt the miſdemeanour he had been guilty of againſt the cuſtoms of the country, and afterwards his own ſtory. The monarch's wrinkles began to be diſpelled by frequent ſmiles; and when the Chief mentioned Mahal's queſtion, Whether the Sultan thought himſelf a god? his Highneſs burſt out into ſuch loud laughs as to make the large globe, which ſupported his right foot, ſhake to and fro, the large gold crown totter on his little head, and his ſides ſwell and fall again like a pair of bellows. The reſt of the aſſembly teſtified their joy only by a few ſober and decorous ſmiles.

Sultan Komar now gave orders to provide the ſtranger with a dwelling and proper ſubſiſtence. A ſet of authors took Mahal in the midſt of them, led him through the different

ſtreets,

ſtreets, and exclaimed, " Farakers! He has ſeen him—he has ſeen him—he has ſeen the great, the magnificent, the mighty!—He has ſeen the ſublime ſage we have formed! He has ſeen the firſt corner-ſtone of ſociety, without whom all is ruin! He has ſeen the powerful Sultan Komar, who has favoured him with a ſmile!"

The Farakers, young and old, cried with a tone of joy tinctured with melancholy, " Ah, happy man! he has ſeen the mighty corner-ſtone! Unhappy us! we have not ſeen him—When ſhall we ſee him? when ſhall he ſmile on us?"

An author called out, " Wiſe and happy he that ſees him not, and ſtill believes."

Mahal was conducted into a very clear and tranſparent dwelling, ſupplied with proviſions, and adviſed to be cautious. It was quite

natural for him to aſk what he ſhould be cautious for; and from his various obſervations I have only been able to draw the following reſult.

The Farakers were formerly a very refractory and rebellious people, fond of innovation. They contended with equal ardour and impetuoſity when they were wrong as when they were right. They were never ſatisfied, and, provided they could quarrel and fight, cared not whether the conſequences were beneficial or hurtful to them. They were on this account ſeldom contented with their ſultans, and theſe more rarely with them. The Gomers alone were authoriſed to write the hiſtory of Farak. The Farakers, it ſeems, felt too much that gratifying ſentiment called freedom, while their rulers were not leſs apt to experience the titillation of deſpotiſm. Theſe are now two ſuch oppo-

oppoſite ſenſations, that the gratifica-tion of the one muſt always give pain to the other, and remain two ex-tremes ſtill irreconcilable among na-tions after the Flood. Farak was therefore the theatre of continual warfare, and the leaſt advantage ob-tained by either of the contending parties terminated in abuſe of victory. The Gomers, or ſages and writers of the country, might eaſily have put an end to the conteſt, by drawing a pro-per line between the parties, and carefully ſeparating and watching the reſpective rights of the champions, and keeping them within limits. Yet it appears that the Gomers of Farak truſted but little to human nature; and this miſtruſt was perhaps the fruit of the knowledge or experience they had in their own ſelves. During the combat they remained very quiet,

as they boaſted of humanity; they employed themſelves in ſtudying truth; and while occupied with remote ſpeculations of philoſophy, they always took care not to loſe ſight of their nearer and more immediate intereſt. They diſcovered, that what would benefit them the moſt, would be ſolely to adhere to him who united all the power in his individual ſelf; and that ſhould this individual by their advice and aſſiſtance triumph over the multitude, it would be much eaſier for them to guide him at their pleaſure than a ſtubborn and fickle populace. All quarrels and feuds muſt thus have ceaſed. They communicated theſe very patriotic thoughts to one another, joined together to execute the intended plan, and thus quietly laboured to found the laſting peace of the empire of

Farak.

Farak. They gradually won the boldeſt and moſt ignorant of the people to their intereſt, began with ſuppreſſing inſignificant rights, ſuch as the ſafety of perſon and property, &c. and terminated with deſtroying thoſe rights without which a people cannot but become what the Farakers became. It muſt however be recorded, to the praiſe of the ſages of Farak, that, if they deſtroyed the ſpirit of liberty in the boſoms of their countrymen, they wiſely and excluſively reſerved it for themſelves. And that this prerogative might never be endangered in their hands, they wove about the Sultan ſo fine a net, that he muſt have been leſs than a dwarf to diſentangle himſelf from it. They took care to make the weakeſt and moſt infirm heir ſucceed to the throne. They acted as guardians to the ſultan-dwarf, and during this in-

terval projected and introduced the plan of the happy government, which I am going to describe here from Mahal's manuscript, as a pattern to posterity.

The first author or writer always held the office of Grand Vizier for life. His election alone occasioned scenes of strife and contention among the learned tribe; and they would have ended by destroying each other, had they not fortunately hit upon the scheme of electing always the eldest among them to that important trust. But to prevent all future misunderstandings, and to save the empire from danger, it was enacted with unanimous approbation, that he alone should bear that exalted dignity, who had written the largest and most voluminous books. I need not tell you what incitement this was for the lettered tribe! On the demise of a

Grand Vizier, every Gomer, bending and coughing under the load of his manuſcripts, went to the hall of election, in which a balance was fixed. The manuſcripts and books were then weighed againſt each other as nicely as gold or jewels, and the moſt ponderous always ſtruck the balance in favour of its poſſeſſor. All other ſtations, from the Grand Vizier to the meaneſt officer of the Sultan's court, were likewiſe filled by writers, and their promotion conſtantly depended on the weight of their works. The parti-coloured cloak diſtinguiſhed them from the reſt of the Farakers. Some of thoſe who held offices under the crown had alſo the rare privilege of putting their ear cloſe to the mouth of the citizens, to look into their lanterns, and ſet down all the words, actions and ſuppoſed thoughts of the

Farakers. To accompliſh this without difficulty, an architect was charged to deſign the plan of a houſe, in which nothing could be ſpoken or done unheard or unſeen from without. Thus originated the neat tranſparent houſes which Mahal ſo much admired when entering the city. Through all the rooms pipes were drawn which communicated with the ſmall aperture or liſtening-hole at each door; and ſo ſkilfully was this contrivance executed, that the leaſt whiſper reſounded quite intelligibly to the liſtening officer. The latter ſet down all he ſaw or heard, and the report was daily brought to the Grand Vizier, who amuſed the Sultan with the moſt intereſting parts of it at his levee. To interrupt a Gomer in the execution of his duty, or to diſturb him, was forbidden under pain of death; and

every

every Faraker who left off ſpeaking when he perceived the liſtener, was marked as a bad or ſuſpicious citizen. For all this trouble of governing the ſtate and liſtening at the Farakers, the Gomers, like the gods of Gin, lived at the expence of thoſe for whoſe happineſs and tranquillity they were ſo aſſiduouſly occupied. Through their care the dwarfiſh Sultan lived in gigantic and unlimited power in his vaſt palace, always ſlept quietly, gratified his pleaſures, had nothing to fear, and might fancy himſelf ſole governor on his golden throne, before whom all trembled, and nobody durſt ſay aught to diſpleaſe him. The net of the Gomers was indeed ſo finely woven, that had their Sultan been a giant in body and underſtanding, he could not have perceived that he was the firſt-ſlave in Farak. And in this

this ſenſe, ſays Mahal, every monarch is a dwarf, if, from good-nature, weakneſs, neglect, incapacity, or want of energy, he ſuffers his Viziers or favourites to govern the people.

In other reſpects, the Farakers were at liberty to work with their heads and hands as much as they pleaſed, except to write books. And what indeed could they want more? "They were even allowed," ſays Mahal, "to amuſe themſelves as they pleaſed, provided all was done ſo as to be ſeen or heard, and without giving farther umbrage to the well-regulated government of the ſtate."

The Gomers found this ſo excellent a conſtitution, that they were never tired of praiſing it both day and night, and overwhelming the Farakers with writings in proſe and verſe,

verſe, and talking of the bleſſings they enjoyed under ſuch a peaceful and happy government. Whoever wiſhed to enjoy the neceſſary reputation of a loyal and well-diſpoſed ſubject, was obliged to read, admire, and cry up thoſe productions in his leiſure hours; and he that did not, paſſed for a ſly, ſuſpicious and ſeditious democrat. This employment was productive of a twofold benefit to the Gomers. In the firſt place, they laudably and honourably exerted themſelves in favour of their happy conſtitution; in the ſecond, they wrote themſelves into ſnug and lucrative places, and each thick book they manufactured, could help them a ſtep higher when their merit came to be weighed. Their books were alſo full of large ſtrokes, flouriſhes, and daſhes, to embelliſh and expand

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the productions of their wit. What a pity it is, that the Flood has ſwept them away!

Behold, Lord of Believers, the means by which a party of men, who never had drawn a ſword or mounted a horſe, and trembled at the word *combat*, put an end to the bloody broils of Farak, and rendered this people the happieſt, quieteſt and moſt bleſſed of all thoſe that flouriſhed on earth in thoſe antediluvian ages! There was no bold ſpeech, no dangerous or deep thought, no offenſive and libellous book to exaſperate and provoke the members of the government. The dwarfiſh Komar could ſit quietly on his throne, the Gomers could write themſelves undiſturbed, and by hereditary ſucceſſion, into places and dignities, and had no danger, no change, no revolution to dread:

dread: every man could live happy, if he choſe to be what the Gomers would make him. To be brief, the Farakers lived as quietly as the dead in the grave, and nothing diſtinguiſhed them from the duſt of their departed anceſtors, but their being obliged to do that which the dead cannot do; that is, to toil and labour for the Gomers, till they became corpſes in appearance.

This form of government might for its quietneſs be recommended every where, ſince quietneſs is all the ſage requires. And what indeed has he to do with a ſet of *factious* raggamuffins that are conſtantly kicking up riots and rebellions for their imaginary rights? It might alſo be very uſefully recommended in thoſe countries whoſe inhabitants are infected with the ſpirit of liberty; but the

monarch

monarch and thoſe of his favourites who may wiſh to introduce it, ought above all things to take care to get the writers over to their ſide, and, to effect it the quicker, give them penſions and places according to the weight of the books they ſhall write in favour of the *good cauſe:* ſhow them the fine proſpects of ruling over the lives, liberties and properties of their fellow-ſubjects, and the hungry tribe will preſently fall to work. Our eaſtern regions, dread Lord, want no ſuch remedy; we have the divine laws of the ſublime Prophet, which determine every thing that now is or ſhall hereafter be; and the ſucceſſors of the great Mahomet ought rather to ſubmit to the ſilken halter, than violate or change a letter of the book of books.

In Europe, where men are ſtill raw

and

and uncultivated, ſuch a conſtitution would thrive amazingly, and we hope the Europeans will introduce it as ſoon as their Gomers ſhall write more books than they can think, or their readers peruſe. But what care we believers for infidels?

*The Caliph.* What ſaid Mahal to all this?

*Ben Hafi.* He thought perhaps as you do, but was afraid to think ſo as to be ſuſpected in his lantern. One day however he had the imprudence to aſk a Gomer: Why his tribe lived in walled dwellings, and the people in lanterns? "Becauſe," anſwered the ſcribbling placeman, "we are not dangerous to the ſtate." "I believe you," retorted Mahal, and by an arch ſmile incurred ſuſpicion.

To his misfortune, Mahal could not help *thinking aloud*; and ſeriouſly as he had

had purpoſed to be cautious at Farak, irkſomeneſs betrayed him one day to make the following monologue: "That Sultan Komar is exactly a diminutive copy of Pooh; and his ſubjects, who inhabit lanterns and dare not ſpeak, are truly worthy of ſuch a ſultan. Thoſe Gomers who do nothing but liſten at the people, and write heavy books, are worſe than the gods of Gin. They did not apply their ears to the Giner's mouth, and the huſband could at leaſt beget a ſlave for them without its being ſeen how he did it. O Lord! What are men! What is become of thy creatures? How could they become that which I ſee and experience?"

No ſooner had Mahal uttered theſe laſt words, than a Gomer entered, and read to him what he had ſpoken. Then addreſſing him with great gravity,

vity, the Gomer ſaid: "Stranger at Farak, I am thy genius, who has undertaken to provide for thy ſafety and happineſs, as long as thou ſhalt remain under our protection. Were I to report thy mad ſpeech to the Sultan, thou wouldſt expiate it with thy dear life. But I have orders to overlook thy firſt fault, and wonder at the grace thou haſt found before his auſtere countenance. Obeying the ſovereign's orders, I only inflict on thee the light puniſhment, not as puniſhment—for it does not deſerve that name—but to enlighten thee: that thou ſhalt read all the books by which our exalted Grand Vizier wrote himſelf into office, and which in proſe and verſe tend to make the Farakers worthy of the bleſſings they enjoy under the happieſt conſtitution. I hope it will convince thee, that Farak is

the only country that flouriſhes under a mild, happy and well-regulated government."

By order of the Gomer, a number of camels laden with the Grand Vizier's books arrived before Mahal's lantern, who was obliged to unload and range them in proper order under the ſage's directions. The latter then conſigned our mountaineer to the care of a ſevere overſeer, who made him immediately enter upon his taſk.

Twenty moons and ſome weeks elapſed before Mahal got through this maſs of volumes. Often did he ſigh in his heart, which was all he could do without putting himſelf in danger: "O Lord," whiſpered his conſcience, "why didſt thou thus ſhockingly puniſh my deſire of knowledge! Thy puniſhment exceeds my ſtrength. Take away my life, and let me not

die

die by inches over theſe dreadful and tedious books!"

In this interval he heard and ſaw nothing particular from his lantern, which ſtood in the centre of a ſquare, except the following ſingular ſcene. An old Gomer, in a beautiful parti-coloured cloak, appeared publicly on the ſquare, and his ſervants were holding three camels laden with his works. Having ſummoned the attention of the Farakers by the ſound of trumpets, and gathered crowds of them reverently around him, he thus exclaimed:

"Hear me, people of Farak. I'll tell you a great thing. Fools prate, but wiſe men are ſilent. I know you; I know one ought to bawl one's merit into your ears, for your ſpirits and your hearts are dull.

"It is now forty-four years ſince

I, the author of all theſe manuſcripts, entered my literary career in the ranks of poets and orators.

" This career embraces almoſt half a century. I commenced it ere the dawn of our wiſdom diſappeared before the riſing ſun of higher knowledge, and I conclude it, as it appears, with its decline.

" Offer then prayers and ſacrifices, that I may live many years longer among you. For, great as the honour would be for me if all wit and wiſdom ſunk with me into the grave, ſtill I pity you too much, poor Farakers !"

The Farakers ſeemed vexed and grieved to the bottom of their hearts, at being threatened with ages ſterile of wit and genius. And many among them vented their ſorrow with ſobs and tears.

One

One of them, who was more accompliſhed than the reſt, now exclaimed: "This ſage has written many excellent things upon politics, both in proſe and verſe, but theſe are the moſt ſublime words he has ſpoken. Let us admire and tranſmit them to our children's children. Ours is ſtill the comfort to warm ourſelves with his writings, if that cold and ſterile winter come, which he has ſo wiſely foretold!"

Mahal ſaid: "The Farakers are a good people indeed!" His overſeer returned: "Why ſhould they not? Have we not formed them?"

Mahal having at laſt performed his ſtupendous taſk, had become ſo diſtracted, that the firſt time he went out, he committed an act of ſuperlative folly, or, in the language of Farak's writers, the greateſt of crimes.

He took an airing out of town along the ſea-ſhore, to thank God that he had ſuffered his puniſhment without loſing his health or life by it. On a ſudden, a large body of Farakers, led by a Gomer in a parti-coloured cloak, advanced to the ſea-ſide, eſcorting three of their countrymen whoſe hands were tied to their backs. Having approached the water, they opened three ſacks, laid ſeveral heavy ſtones in each of them, and, putting in the three pinioned ſufferers, were going to throw them into the deep. Mahal, who had till now been a quiet ſpectator, ruſhed among the multitude, and aſked the cauſe of ſo barbarous a deed. The Gomer condeſcended to ſay:

"The firſt man here has committed the atrocious crime of calling our great Sultan Komar a dwarf!

"The

"The ſecond has been guilty of the more horrid crime of cenſuring our excellent conſtitution, the wonder of all ages!

"The third has perpetrated the moſt horrid of all crimes, by ſtyling a book written by our dignified chief, the Grand Vizier, a wretched and pitiful performance!"

The man of the mountain replied: "Ye mad and wicked hypocrites! is not your conſtitution a monſter? Is not your Sultan a dwarf? Are not the books of your Grand Vizier, the reading of which almoſt killed me, a jumble of the flatteſt abſurdities?"

The wiſe Gomer cried: "Farakers, be deaf!" and the Farakers replied: "We were deaf! We are deaf!"

The Gomer gave a ſignal, and the people gagged Mahal's mouth, and handcuffed him.

The three delinquents, previous to their execution, were now obliged to cry out of their ſacks:

"The Sultan is no dwarf! The conſtitution of Farak is the beſt in the world! The works of the Grand Vizier are the ſublimeſt monuments of human genius!"

They were then committed to their watery grave, and the Farakers returned with their priſoner to the city. Mahal being a ſtranger, and the Sultan having ſo heartily laughed at him, his puniſhment of death was moſt graciouſly commuted into baniſhment and whipping.

*The Caliph.* Oh, don't let the poor fellow be whipped! He ſuffers for the truth, and I forget all his other bold arguments.

*Ben Haſi.* It could not be helped, dread Lord; and Mahal aſſures us, that he

he did not ſuffer half ſo much from the laſhes of the whip, as he did in peruſing the G and Vizier's books.

*The Caliph.* Moſt likely he did not, but he muſt know beſt.

*Ben Hafi.* Mahal now curſed the Farakers, the Giners, the Iradians, the Enochers, and all book-makers, and was tranſported beyond the frontier.

Ben Hafi here made a reſpectful bow, and withdrew.

# TWELFTH EVENING.

BEN HAFI made his appearance punctually to a minute, and was juſt going to begin, when the Caliph thus interrupted him:

*The Caliph.* Thy tales, Ben Hafi, have lately been ſo very ſhocking, that nothing but my pledged word can prevail on me to ſuffer thee to go on.

*Ben Hafi.* Their being true is the only thing to be lamented; and their being inſtructive to nations and princes is what compenſates the diſagreeable impreſſion they will make upon the mind of ſome.

*The Caliph.* I hope this evening's tale will be merrier than the reſt.

*Ben Haſi.* I will not anſwer for it, though I am confident that one part of it will pleaſe your Highneſs very much.

*The Caliph.* Then begin it.

*Ben Haſi.* Thus far, ſucceſſor of the Prophet, Mahal had only ſeen men that were ripe; but he was now to behold ſuch as were over-ripe; that is to ſay, men who riot ſo long with their underſtanding and imagination, till they beget monſters—Salamanders of the ſpiritual or intellectual world, who have killed ſimplicity on earth, baniſhed from it natural happineſs, and invented a game which diſſolves in man thoſe energies that he requires to bear and combat neceſſary evils.

Mahal was now in the great empire of Copha, the moſt enlightened after Farak,

Farak, and truly calculated either to completely finiſh a philoſopher, or to confound him entirely.

While Mahal was walking up and down the ſquare of the capital, he perceived a man, whoſe face was fluſhed with the roſes of health and good-living, advance towards him. Notwithſtanding this outward change, he thought he knew the mien and deportment of the perſon, and was not miſtaken in his conjecture. It was Ram, his old teacher at Enoch, who had ſo abruptly left him in the foreſt near Irad. Ram, recognizing him at firſt ſight, bade him a friendly welcome at Copha.

*Mahal.* If I am not ſo diſagreeable to thee as I was when thou ſo ſcornfully leſteſt me, take me under thy protection. So many are the ills I have experienced, as to be almoſt

afraid

afraid of ſetting my foot on ſtrange ground.

*Ram.* I hope then human life is become clearer to thee than at Enoch, and that thou haſt traced out its ſources, which thou ſo eagerly ſoughteſt there?

*Mahal.* Not at all.

*Ram.* Then I praiſe thy happy lot. Thou art now in a country where all is known, as it is known that nothing can be known. But I ſuppoſe thy propenſity to wonder and aſtoniſhment has ſomewhat abated.

*Mahal.* So ſo; but I have rather loſt than won by it. Pray, where am I now?

*Ram.* In the land of Reaſon! In the empire of Wiſdom! In a country whoſe Sultan is a philoſopher, to whom I came becauſe he knows how to eſteem people of my ſtamp.

*Mahal.* Then he certainly does not take

take himself for a god, like all the fools I have seen.

*Ram.* By no means; he is a philosopher, a thinker, who suffers none but thinkers about him, and wants to make all his subjects thinkers*. He has resolved to discard God, because he makes himself incomprehensible through his own fault, and to put himself in his place. The people are already prepared for this event, and you will see the wonders which Reason works in this country.

*Mahal.* Then let me immediately quit it.

*The Caliph.* Please God he may! I expect no good of this land and its Sultan, and am sorry that Mahal has met Ram here.

* The Arabic manuscript uses the word thinker, which in the European languages implies a philosopher.

*Ram.*

*Ram.* What! ſhould the man who left the mountain for the ſake of knowledge, fly at its very ſource?

*Mahal.* Firſt of all, tell me, what is a thinker or philoſopher?

*Ram.* Such a thing as I am: a man that now knows nothing, now every thing, and rails at all. But this is a mere joke: I am a philoſopher of the Sultan Thinker; I am very well off; and, if aught is to be made of thee, thou ſhalt ſoon be the partner of my proſperity. But thou muſt declare war againſt all the opinions thou haſt hitherto imbibed, and follow only the laws of pure Reaſon, elſe thou art uſeleſs here. Come to my dwelling, that I may ſound the ſtate of thy perplexed brain.

Mahal followed Ram to a houſe, which was more like a little temple of ſenſuality than an abode of wiſdom.

"Thou

"Thou mayeſt ſee now," ſaid Ram, "that Sultan Thinker knows how to value his friends. I brought nothing here but my naked body; but the ſpirit which the Sultan diſcovered in me, has made him thus ſupply my wants."

Mahal was refreſhed with the greateſt dainties the ſeaſon could afford; but the thought that the Sultan would aboliſh God, embittered all the contentment which he would otherwiſe have felt, and rouſed his miſtruſt. Ram, after railing at him a good while, requeſted to hear his ſtory, with which deſire Mahal faithfully complied. Ram, liſtening very attentively to the narrator, ſmiled at every diſaſter which had befallen his gueſt. The adventures at Irad, Pooh's fall, the peruſal of the works of the Grand Vizier of Farak, and the whipping, made him quite merry. At the concluſion he

ſaid

ſaid to Mahal, "I ſee thou art ſtill the old man; but the Sultan of this country loves oddity and novelty. I will introduce thee to him, thou wilt recount thy ſtory, and he will probably make thy fortune for life."

*Mahal.* Thou knoweſt that I am commanded by the Lord to return to the mountain as ſoon as I ſhall have diſcovered the ſources of human folly and wickedneſs. I believe that you are more fooliſh here than any where elſe.

*Ram.* May be ſo, and this makes us the worthier of being ſeen. But I will firſt make thee acquainted with our Sultan's character and hiſtory, leſt ſome trick of thine expoſe thee to new dangers.

The father of Sultan Thinker was a great and powerful man. He loved heroic fame, and with the lives of many

thouſands of his Copts purchaſed the men of Mullah and Sullah as his ſubjects. As the Sullahers and Mullahers coſt but little gold and a great deal of blood, he thought it an excellent bargain. Being ſole ruler of the three empires, he began to make his reign tolerable, and as a good father took care to leave his children to be the people's inheritance. He took a wife, got three ſons, each of whom he named from the particular qualities of mind he diſcovered in him. He reſolved to diſtribute the three empires among theſe three ſons, ſo as to make the character of the ruler truly conſonant, as he thought, with the temper of the ruled.

His firſt ſon Fakim (Thinker) obtained this diſtinguiſhed name, by tearing or beating to pieces every thing that was put into his hands to amuſe

amuſe him; by pauſing and reflecting ſo long upon the fragments and ruins, and putting them together in ſuch various and ſtrange forms, till he believed to have diſcovered the mechaniſm of their formation, or formed ſomething elſe of them, however odd and diſtorted. But never would he attempt to reſtore a thing to its former ſtate; a proof this of his profound, indefatigable and penetrative ſpirit. For this reaſon the diſcerning parent deſtined him from his earlieſt infancy to be the future monarch of the penſive, freakiſh and fretful Copts. The bare name often does wonders; and the little man, hearing himſelf always called Thinker and Sovereign, already thought himſelf both, and created a pretty monſter of the two notions. The teachers appointed to inſtruct him very naturally uſed their beſt en-

deavours to give form and poliſh to that monſter, and to impreſs their pupil with ſuch a powerful idea of his penetrating ſpirit, that he is actually become the proudeſt thinker in his empire, and finds ſuch delight in thinking as to wiſh for no leſs than to make ſuch vaſt thinkers of his ſubjects as he deems himſelf to be. He will not be happy till he ſhall reign a thinker over thinkers. As to his court, he has already brought it ſo far, that the ſorrieſt Copts are quite adepts in their Sultan's favourite paſſion. They grow wittier on one ſide, and more ſtupid on the other. The only fault which ſome fooliſh people pretend to have thus far diſcovered in the Copts, is, that ſince their Sultan has made them great thinkers, they are become worſe workmen and worſe men. But all this will be done away, if they ſhall

once

once be able to read plainly the moral laws which are written with ſuch nice and fine characters in reaſon. Theſe moral laws are the invention of Sultan Thinker; and thou wilt be aſtoniſhed, how eaſy it is to lead men to this long ſought, long wiſhed for, and uſeful perfection.

*Mubal.* But could not you tell me what thoſe memorable laws were?

*Ram.* I will. They were ſome magic formules, or tenets, which will all at once cure mankind of all moral evil, of all diſquietude of mind, of injuſtice, of covetouſneſs and ſcepticiſm, which will reduce every thing to a ſimple principle, and make men as pure and perfect beings as their biped ſpecies, that ſubſiſts on earthy food and drink, can poſſibly be.

The firſt formule is this: None of our notions and conceptions exceeds

the experience of our five ſenſes. That is to ſay: All thou canſt not ſmell, taſte, hear, feel or ſee, is nought for thee, does not exiſt for thee; and all thou haſt ever thought, ſhalt think, or art now thinking, muſt ariſe from the impreſſions thy ſenſes have received, which thou haſt perceived and diſtinguiſhed.

The ſecond formule is more ſublime: Thou ſhouldſt always act ſo, that the motive of thy actions may become a general obligatory moral law to all men.

The third formule, the reſult of the former, runs thus: The motive of thy actions ought to ſpring from a free will; animal pleaſure or pain ought not to have the leaſt influence over it. All thou doſt, muſt be done without fear of the puniſhment which may follow the action, and without hope of a

reward

reward which it may merit; act only becauſe the action is good, and commanded by pure and uncorrupted reaſon*.

*Mahal.*

* *This ſublime principle of morality, which the Editor acknowledges as the ſole genuine and true one, and which no man has doubted, or ever will doubt, has certainly not been inſerted here to be railed at. The reaſon why it has been introduced is unequivocally manifeſt. That this Sultan Thinker and his philoſophers ſhould miſuſe it, proves as little againſt it, as common experience againſt chriſtianity becauſe there have been bad chriſtians from its beginning to this very day, though the ſame ſublime principle is ſaid to be recommended in the Goſpel. If we take it as a rule of conduct for men to act by, it is the moſt elevated that enlightened reaſon can produce; if we compare it with daily experience, it is the moſt biting ſatire againſt men: and Lucian, Swift, and Rabelais could not have laſhed them more ſarcaſtically than theſe few words do. It is not new; for, from the ancient philoſophers down to the Platonic Shafteſbury, many have ſtrongly inculcated it; but*

*Mahal.* Though I conceive all this pretty well, yet I don't remember to have found in my travels one man who acted in conformity with thoſe magic formules as you call them. Every one acted juſt as if he were the only individual in the world.

*Ram.* And this you'll find here too; yet it is good and uſeful to remind men frequently, how they ſhould

*none more forcibly than the woman in Damaſcus, whom the ambaſſador of Louis King of France, commonly called St. Louis, ſaw in the ſtreets, with fire in one hand, and water in the other. The ambaſſador aſking the reaſon of ſo ſingular an appearance, ſhe anſwered in the ſpirit of this principle: "With the fire I will burn Paradiſe, with the water extinguiſh the fire of Hell, that men may worſhip God for his own ſake, and not as mercenary labourers." That this principle may become a general practice, it only requires that this and that may happen, and till then it may ſerve as the teſt to judge the world of human actions.*

be.

be. The only difficulty is, that we cannot quite cure the Copts of the ſenſation of pleaſure and reluctance, and that they always continue to fear and to hope.

Beſides this, there are a few little contradictions; but ſo very trifling theſe are, that the Sultan only laughs at them. We ſay, for inſtance, Man is free; he depends entirely upon the laws of his reaſon, which he of courſe impoſes on himſelf. Since reaſon conſtitutes, properly ſpeaking, his own ſelf, man is naturally his own legiſlator. But againſt this a fourth formule expreſſeth, The ſultan is your unbounded lord; his will is your law; this you ought to obey, however repugnant it may be, in your opinion, to the laws of your reaſon.

Much as the Sultan ſubjects himſelf to the laws of his reaſon, he ſtill can-

not forget he is ſultan; and a ſultan, my good friend, muſt command many things in oppoſition to reaſon; and hence it probably ariſes, that nothing is more difficult for him than to be a philoſopher at the ſame time, becauſe the peculiarity of his office, and the claims and pretenſions that flow from it, are ſo inconſiſtent with philoſophy. Every ſultan alſo makes uſe of the falſe notions of pleaſure and pain, of will and reluctance, which, though they have cauſed all the evils in ſociety, have nevertheleſs kept it in motion. Without them it would but little be worth our while to philoſophize with Sultan Thinker. But all this will be brought about, provided we once pull out the pernicious weeds that grow up by the ſide of reaſon.

*Mabal.* I underſtand nothing of all this.

*Ram.*

*Ram.* Why ſhouldſt thou? It would be a pretty buſineſs to philoſophiſe, if fellows like thee did immediately underſtand what has coſt us ſo many hours thinking.

*Mabal.* But why doſt thou then tell me of it?

*Ram.* To make thee a greater fool than thou actually art, and to teach thee new words. Let me now go on with my ſtory.

The old Sultan called his ſecond ſon Gripik, which in our language means "*Beautifier.*" He gave him this name becauſe he attempted to beautify and embelliſh every thing that fell into his hands, regardleſs of its being ſuſceptible or not of his intended ornaments. He daubed men, animals, and all his play-things with glittering and dazzling colours. He cut and carved at everything, to give it a better

a better form than nature or art had given it. From his earlieſt infancy he ſpoke alſo in high-ſounding and choſen ſentences, was fond of, and ſelected, every thing above the common mode of expreſſion, couched all he ſpoke in grand and ſublime images, and ſeemed to be all fancy himſelf. His father procured him a preceptor of the ſame caſt; and under his tuition he became ſo refined in the taſte of the beautiful and ſublime, that all common-place phraſes and things became quite inſupportable to him. He was a perſon of the moſt tender feelings, of the fineſt taſte, and of ſo ſublime a ſenſe, that every thing related in the plain ſhape of truth became a torment to him. Every one at his court walked on ſolemn ſtilts, and ſpoke in metaphors, allegories, and other figurative images. His father

pitched

pitched upon the Sullahers as his ſubjects, a lively and gay people, quite devoted to joy and delight. Every thing is ſaid to go on in a grand and magnificent manner at Sullah; every body lives in the enjoyment of the beautiful and ſublime, riots in fancy, ſings all the virtues, eſpecially thoſe of Sultan Beautifier; and it is even reported, they talk of God in that country, becauſe he is a grand, magnificent, myſterious and poetical ſubject. Our philoſophers pretend, that the Sullahers, with their delicious and elevated feelings, loſe not only all ſenſe of truth, but even forget in the tickle of their imagination to do that which foſters the fire of that fair enchantreſs; and that the conſequences of the poetic *mania* are already felt at Sullah. But philoſophers or thinkers ſeldom

dom ſpeak well of beautifiers, and theſe, in their turn, rarely praiſe thinkers.

*The Caliph.* How true the Prophet ſpeaks of poets: " *Bereſt of their ſenſes they run about in the vallies, and talk what they do not perform* "

*Mahal.* Such was exactly the caſe before the Flood, and, as the Prophet proves, ſtill is.

" The third ſon," continued Ram, " was called Sultan Pah, which in the common Arabic ſignifies the *Simple.* This Pah was of ſo common a caſt, that he neither ſeemed to think profoundly, nor to feel the beautiful, but went through the neceſſary functions of life like every other vulgar man. He did not care how he did a thing, whether by his own free will or from neceſſity, through inclination or averſion, or by the laws of reaſon: in ſhort, all he was charged to do, he did

did as eagerly and faithfully as a beaſt of burthen, whoſe qualities, my dear Mahal, muſt ſtill be recent in thy memory. His father, finding ſo little remarkable in him, wiſely left him to his own innate ſimplicity, and gave him no other tutor. Him he reſerved to be the Sultan of the Mullahers, a rough, unpoliſhed people, but boaſting of one quality, which our Sultan is endeavouring to ſecure likewiſe to the Copts. They know nothing more of God, and have totally forgotten him; they plant, ſow, reap, hunt, fiſh, eat and drink, lie with their wives, know not whence they come, whither they ſhall go, nor even enquire about it! It is a ſtupid, healthy, happy and ſtrong people, that bids defiance to death itſelf; and if the God, with whom thou pretendeſt to have ſpoken, intends to deſtroy them along with us cultivated

and refined people, verily he will deſtroy men who, as they know nothing of him, are incapable of giving offence to his greatneſs.

*The Caliph.* Let this Ram ſay no more.

*Ben Hafi.* It ſerves to bring us to the right purpoſe, which otherwiſe we ſhall miſs.—" But this," reſumed Ram, " is not my buſineſs, but thy God's. What, Mahal, thou turneſt pale!—Be eaſy, I beg, and thy ear will ſoon accuſtom itſelf to all this."

*The Caliph.* What fatality, that Mahal ſhould have fallen in with this blaſphemous Ram! I think, Ben Hafi, it is the bad ſpirit Eblis himſelf, who, in the form of Ram, tries to make Mahal deſert his God.

*Ben Hafi.* It might be ſo, and the maſk of philoſophy might beſt anſwer ſuch a purpoſe; but all is very natural in this tale, and Ram is nothing

thing but a man.—" There are ſome people here," continued Ram, " who maintain, that the old Sultan would have done better to have made the profound Thinker ſultan over the airy Sullahers, and the ſublime Beautifier ruler over the capricious and humourſome Copts. Others even go ſo far as to ſay, that the three empires ought to have been left to Sultan Simple, becauſe he would have ruled men in their own way. But we philoſophers know better. And behold, Mahal, ſo dull and daſtardly are men, as to quit the refined empires of Copha and Sullah to ſettle among the wild Mullahers, while none of the latter come over to us! Sultan Thinker is of opinion, that all this will be brought about; and who of us would attempt to leſſen his hopes?

"The old Sultan was lying on his death-bed, ſurrounded by the three heirs of his thrones. He made a long ſpeech, and confeſſed, as ſultans will ſometimes do, his faults, of which he now for the firſt time repented. This is a very good cuſtom of dying ſultans; but a pity it is, that it avails nothing, ſince that which is done cannot be undone, and the heirs during the confeſſion generally think of ſomething elſe, rather than gather uſeful advice and warning from ſuch a confeſſion. This was alſo the caſe here. Simple wailed and wept like a raw, uncultivated man, at the approaching loſs of his father; Sultan Beautifier was making a fine funeral oration in his mind; and Sultan Thinker ſecretly laughed at the old fool, who talked of ſins againſt his people, and a Being which he even then

then thought of diſcarding as ſuperfluous. He alſo was of opinion, that it was time that a man who knew ſo little about the laws of reaſon, ſhould make room for him who intended to govern entirely by theſe laws. To prevent irkſomeneſs, he reſolved to watch what ſhould leave his father with his laſt breath, whether it was nothing, or ſome little body. Sultan Beautifier ran away at the firſt agonies of death, that he might not ſee thoſe horrid convulſions. Simple continued wailing; and Thinker was inwardly provoked againſt his vulgar brother, and cannot pardon him his weakneſs to this very day. A few moments before his exit the old Sultan ſaid, 'I am very eaſy about my two eldeſt ſons: the one has wit, the other ſenſibility; but Simple! poor Simple!' The latter now kiſſed his

father's hands, laid another pillow under his head, and the old man ſunk into his arms and died. Simple remained alone with his father's corpſe, and wept over it. Sultan Thinker has related all this to me with a great deal of philoſophic pride, adding, that having ſeen nothing leave his father's body when he expired, he concluded that nothing could have been in it.

" After Sultan Beautifier had read his fine funeral oration, Simple wept his fill, and Thinker railed as much as he could at both, every one followed his deſtination. Each of them ſeated himſelf on his golden throne; and all goes wonderfully well, at leaſt at Copha, where I congratulate thee on thy arrival. Now I muſt to the Sultan to announce thee to him, as a perſon very ſuſceptible of improvement and perfection. Take care not

to

to play any of thy old tricks; and to prevent it as much as poſſible, I will ſit by thy ſide."

Ram announced his gueſt to the Sultan, who gave orders to introduce him at the firſt meeting into the hall of *Reaſon*. The Sultan's palace contained three halls of aſſembly, viz. the hall of Reaſon, the hall of Truth, and the hall of Light; but in theſe three halls there was ſeldom any thing reaſonable, true, or clear to be heard; and they reſembled in this reſpect many of the philoſophical aſſembly-halls after the Flood, though theſe are not ſo ſplendidly decorated, nor to be found at the palaces of ſultans. Waiting the period of his public appearance, Ram preſented his friend privately to the Sultan; and Mahal being then but a liſtener to their diſcourſe, they thought him a very pro-

miſing ſubject, and even aſſured him of their protection. But the opinion which Mahal conceived of them was far from being ſo favourable; for he felt his mind grow darker and darker, and ſhuddered when they ſo raſhly cut aſunder the knot, which he had always been ſo anxious to untie.

The day came on which Mahal was publicly to appear in the hall of Reaſon. Ram introduced him. Sultan Thinker was ſeated among his brethren, without any mark to diſtinguiſh his power. Here reigned univerſal equality, and a man's merit was only meaſured in proportion to his reaſon. On the wall of the aſſembly hall the above-mentioned magic formules were engraven in golden characters. Sultan Thinker was a thin, haggard looking figure, of a pale countenance, ſufficiently expreſſive of

his proud ſelf-complacency. Mahal was deſired to ſit facing him, and begin to relate his ſtory without any farther formalities. Ram took a ſeat next to him. The whole aſſembly heard him very attentively for ſome time, and even nodded approbation at the deſcription of his ardent thirſt for knowledge; but when he mentioned how God had appeared to him, Sultan Thinker burſt out into a loud laugh, which was repeated by the whole aſſembly, while the hall of Reaſon re-echoed with peals of philoſophic mirth. Mahal ſat there like a man ſuddenly ſurpriſed and beat by a ſuperior enemy.

Ram, who had foreſeen the effect it would have, ſmiled now, and ſaid to the Sultan, "Pity the poor ſilly man, and rather let him feel the pe-

netration of thy wiſdom, and the point of thy wit."

Mahal was going to reply, but Ram prevented him, ſaying, " I put thee, thou ſeeſt, in a fair way; hold thy tongue, and provoke not theſe Thinkers here, elſe thou wilt not get off ſo well as thou didſt at Gin and Farak."

Sultan Thinker ſeemed for ſome minutes loſt in thought, and all the aſſembly kept a profound ſilence. At laſt he opened his pale lips, aſſumed the poſture of an all-confuting philoſopher, and all his brethren's looks were directed towards him.

*Sultan Thinker.* Stranger, thou ſayeſt thou haſt ſeen God?

*Mahal.* That I have!

*Sultan Thinker.* Then thou muſt have ſeen him in human, or in ſome other

other ſhape; thou muſt have heard him ſpeak in a human or ſome other language intelligible to thee?

*Mahal.* To be ſure, I have!

*Sultan Thinker.* Well! If thou haſt ſeen God in human form, and heard him ſpeak with a human voice, thou haſt not ſeen God, not heard a divine voice, but ſeen a human form, and heard a human voice. We know nothing of God, becauſe he did not want us to know any thing of him. We are all convinced that we cannot conceive him with our ſenſes; and what we cannot conceive with our ſenſes, is nothing to us. If we think any thing under this idea, or if we fancy as if we thought ſomething under it, we ſay comparatively according to the meaſure of our ſenſes: He is infinite, immenſurable, unattainable and inviſible to the eye of man.

man. You ſee all theſe are oppoſites to our being. We may alſo call him the creator and preſerver of all things, without expreſſing any clear and diſtinct thought by it, becauſe our ſenſes can comprehend nothing of it; and what our ſenſes cannot comprehend, is nothing; nor can ever become truth to us, by virtue of the firſt formule of our laws.

" Man of the Mountain! If, as thou pretendeſt, thou haſt ſeen God in ſome form, thou haſt ſeen him contained in and limited to this form. If thou haſt ſeen him contained in and limited to this form, he was then neither infinite, nor immenſurable, nor omnipotent, nor inviſible to the eye—but he was in that moment finite, menſurable, attainable, viſible, and limited in his power, like all of us here, who are contained in our bodies.

dies. It is farther ſaid, that his ſpirit penetrates all the worlds, and all that is and lives upon and in them. Theſe worlds muſt therefore at that moment have concentred and ſunk into his finite and limited form. And ſince they did not ſink and fall down together in the moment when thou ſaweſt God in a human figure, and ſince we are all here ſtill with thoſe worlds, both we and they could exiſt at that moment without his influence: and if we and they could exiſt during thy converſation with him, without his influence, we and all could ſpring alſo into exiſtence without him. Or wert thou to ſay that thou only ſaweſt part of him concealed in that form, thou wouldſt again diſſolve his being by thinking him diviſible. Thou haſt therefore talked nonſenſe, or haſt ſeen ſome phantom."

The

The loudeſt burſts of applauſe followed this ſpeech of Sultan Thinker, who coolly looked at the ſhuddering and confuſed Mahal. The latter wanted to riſe with impetuous zeal, but Ram forcibly kept him on his ſeat, ſaying: "Hold thy tongue; I tell thee once more, that this Sultan and his friends are far more dangerous than all the ſultans and gods thou haſt ſeen."

*The Caliph (with enthuſiaſm and indignation).* Bleſſed be God Almighty! *Ye believe and ſhall die, and ſhall riſe again. Behold there is a man diſputing about God, without the knowledge and guidance of a revealed book! He winds himſelf in his ſpirit, to ſeduce men from the way of the Lord. Diſgrace ſhall be his reward in this world; and on the day when the mother, forgetting her ſuckling panting with thirſt,*

*ſhall*

*ſhall not hear his moans; on the day of reſurrection ſhall be ſuffer the torments of the fire. The infidels ſhall be dreſſed in flaming garments, boiling water ſhall be poured on their heads to diſſolve their ſkin and their bowels, and they ſhall be beaten with iron clubs.*

*Ben Haſi.* Regardleſs of Ram's admonition and threats, Mahal could not help opening his quivering lips, crying, " I ſaw no phantom then; but now I ſee faces before me more horrid than any which human folly ever preſented to my ſight. O ye Atheiſts!"—Sultan Thinker replied, " It is thy ſtory we want. We neither affirm nor negative the exiſtence of thy God. What does not chooſe to be comprehended, and is not to be comprehended, becomes for us a pure non-entity. What thou haſt been ſaying of him is preſumption, and

Pre-

Preſumption ought not to raiſe her voice in the hall of Reaſon. Thou mayſt amuſe me with thy tales at table." Mahal now continued his ſtory; and mentioning his commiſſion from the Lord, the aſſembly humorouſly took it for ſome allegory, which afforded them a good deal of ridicule. He then related his adventures at the courts of the different Sultans. Though Sultan Thinker conſidered all thoſe princes as fools, he ſtill thought them prudent for ſtyling themſelves gods. He ſaid, "Man requires a ſenſual repreſentation of the might and power ſet over him; and as the idea of God baffles all comprehenſion, and degenerates into nonſenſe, its utility cannot be better ſenſualized than by the image of a reigning ſultan; and ſuch is the plan we meditate."

Mahal,

Mahal, having finiſhed his narrative, propoſed the following queſtions: "Now ye, who, from your own words, know ſo much and yet ſo little, who have confounded my underſtanding much more by what you have ſpoken, illumine me only in one point, and tell me, Why is man not better than I find him here, and have found him every where? Why is he ſo very bad? What may be the cauſe? Is it within or without him? And ſhow me plainly the ſource of his folly and wickedneſs."

One of the Thinkers or Philoſophers coolly replied, "Friend, man is neither good nor bad."

*Mahal.* Then I wiſh thou hadſt travelled in my place; hadſt been in danger to be caſtrated at Enoch, uſed as a beaſt of burthen at Irad, ſtabbed at Gin, compelled to read

for twenty tedious moons the ſtupendous works of the Grand Vizier of Farak, and been whipped at laſt for a change.

*The Firſt Philoſopher.* And what proves this? That which thou ſufferedſt there appeared to thee as bad, but it only was ſo in regard to thyſelf. To thoſe who did it, it was good, uſeful and ſalutary. Wert thou wiſer than thou ſeemeſt to me, thy experience would have taught thee better. Since that which appears an evil to thee, may prove a benefit to others, and that which appears a benefit to thee, an evil to others, thou mayſt plainly perceive, that good and evil are only two words to denote that which in our conſideration is individually beneficial or hurtful.

*Second Philoſopher.* This deteſtable doctrine has unfortunately expe-

rience in its favour, and even ſeems to be the motive of all human actions: but he thinks not wiſely that is buried in the mire of ſelfiſhneſs; he rather ſhows the elevated height on which man may ſtand, ought to ſtand, and one day ſhall ſtand. By this horrid doctrine neither our Sultan nor we are in ſafety of life or property. For a Copt need but deem any crime againſt him or us practicable in point of execution, and himſelf ſafe from the danger of being diſcovered, to be eaſily excited to the commiſſion of it by thy doctrine of utility. Would not the evil he would commit upon the Sultan, or any of us, be a benefit to him? I ſay man is bad, becauſe he is the ſport of inclination and diſinclination; becauſe he does not weigh and fix his actions according to the

laws of reaſon, which it preſcribes to itſelf; and does not act without fear or hope.

*Ram.* Mahal might ſtill aſk whence this comes: and I doubt as little of the anſwer thou mighteſt give as of that thou haſt already given. But, to inſtruct this animal of a man, I aſk thee, Whence come thoſe laws?

*Second Philoſopher.* From Reaſon, the ſupreme legiſlator.

*Firſt Philoſopher.* Then there is indeed no writer, no legiſlator, whoſe commands are leſs obeyed than hers. All men, thou thyſelf acteſt by the inſtinct of the fleſh, the excitement of pleaſure, intereſt, the ſenſation of pain; and all this reduces human life to one clear, definite and plain principle, that can alone be comprehended by our ſenſes, and agrees, as thou ſayeſt, with expe-

experience. Beſides it, there is nothing but doubt, contradiction, or illuſion. In what a ſhocking light muſt man then appear, if, as thou telleſt us, he carries about with him thoſe laws acknowledged by his reaſon, and inculcated by his ſupreme legiſlator, if he can hourly ſit and read them, and ſtill acts as if he knew no other law but that of intereſt and ſelfiſhneſs! Either thoſe laws of reaſon are not quite ſo plain and intelligible, the eye that is to ſee them not duly organized for them, or he that is to read them underſtands not the language in which they are written; or the ſtronger, the more powerful and common animal inſtincts cover them with a cloud at the moment they are to decide an intended action. Is it ſo? Whoſe fault is it? If man were intended to live

in conformity to thoſe laws of his reaſon, it is they, and not his ſenſes, that ought to govern.

*Second Philoſopher.* Thy contradiction is clear nonſenſe. The law of reaſon exiſts and ſpeaks aloud, and is given to regulate inclination and diſinclination in ſuch a manner that none may gratify either at the expence of the other.

*Firſt Philoſopher.* Every one in the world lives at the expence of others: the world itſelf ſubſiſts on its own materials, and feeds and deſtroys itſelf in order to exiſt.

*Sultan Thinker.* We ſpeak of men here, not of animals. Men certainly are neither more nor leſs than they can be; but ſages and their rulers can make much of them, even that for which they don't ſeem to be formed. Hence man is the wonder of animated

nature.

nature. Conſtantly actuated by inſtincts and deſires, we fetter him with the cold but brilliant chain of reaſon, and tie him to the law exiſting within himſelf, by which he can conquer every thing except neceſſity. Even ſtruggling and cruſhed under neceſſity's painful yoke, he eludes it ſo far by reaſon, that this yoke may overwhelm, but not compel him to act againſt her laws. This ſurely is no eaſy taſk, and requires ſuch men as we ſtrive to become, and as we wiſh to form the Copts—men of a ſuperior kind, who do good for the ſake of good, who fulfil their duty for the ſake of duty, who act from a free will, and never loſe ſight of the formules of reaſon and morality. If once we ſhall bring matters thus far, we ſhall have triumphed over evil, and be equal

to that which ſome imagine the gods to be.

*Firſt Philoſopher.* The good would then alſo be rooted out; for what were it without the bad? If the good became neceſſity, as the bad ſeems unfortunately to have become, where would be the merit of the good man? Let that moment come, which is ſtill diſtant, and probably never will come, and we ſhall ſink into cold indifference, in which thoſe may live whom the poets at the court of your brother Beautifier ſometimes ſing, to fill their high-ſounding and empty verſes with images.

*Sultan Thinker.* So much the better: then we ſhall be gods in the form of men.

*Ram.* I don't riſe, mighty Sultan, to refute thy arguments, but to make thy

thy wit ſhine at my own expence.— Yes, we ſhall become gods, and ſuch gods, to whom their humanity will remain a profound myſtery, and who will not know what to think of this word, ſo ſoon as they ſhall apply it to their deſtination, and weigh the oppoſite and contradictory means that are to lead them to it. It is in vain to aſk, why man is bad? whether the bad ſprings from the neceſſity of his nature, or from his depraved will? In each ſcale lies the truth, but alſo doubt and contradiction: whichever we ſeize, we cannot lay hold of one without the other. Man is born to obſcurity; at leaſt to a clear kind of obſcurity, and he never will know any thing certain of his origin or deſtination, as he never will be able to comprehend that upon which, in the opinion of many, he is ſaid to depend.

Therefore, as we feel the inſtinct of evil, and cannot comprehend any thing of God, who is ſaid to reward the good and to puniſh the evil in the manner man is accuſtomed to comprehend, nothing can bind us ſprung from the earth, which feeds and torments us with the ills annexed to her, but that which binds the beaſt, which, like us, lives and dies on her. The greedieſt devourer, the beſt hunter, is the biggeſt man among us. What makes us be that, I need not develop to men who aſſemble in the hall of Reaſon. But to return to the chief point on which every thing finally depends: there have been fools and ſages, and there may ſtill be ſome, who, by a ſomething in themſelves, which can be as little comprehended as ſenſually underſtood, have put themſelves in connection with another world, who have

have aſſerted that thoſe who live according to the laws of reaſon will ſee the light after death, acknowledge the being of God, and experience all which we had had moſt occaſion to know on earth.

*The Caliph.* Oh, that I were as deaf as my faithful Maſul!

*Ben Haſi.* Ram continued: "It may be ſo. For who can tell what can be and what cannot be? But I aſk, How ſhall men know the being of God? Wholly or partially? Are they to become ſo perfect as not to leave one obſcure ſpot in their illumined ſpirit? If they comprehend the being of God entirely, they muſt become equal to him; and the finite and limited muſt then become infinite and illimited, elſe the meaſure of their comprehenſion of the infinite will fall too ſhort. If they comprehend him but partially,

the

the old plague which torments us on earth will remain, becauſe the leaſt obſcure ſpot that remains unenlightened in their mind will throw a dark ſhade over the bright parts, and render thoſe ſo near to perfection equally liable to the faulty and defective, as we in our total darkneſs have the good or bad fortune to ſhow ourſelves.

" If you wiſh to admit a ſcale of gradation, as we do in the created world; and ſay, the chain of ſpirits aſcends and deſcends, you will have the ſame ſenſual ladder there which you have here, from the moſt perfect ſpirit, ſuch for inſtance as our Sultan is, down to the worm; and he that is next to the throne of the unknown myſtic being muſt comparatively be remoter from him than we are from our Sultan. If they comprehended

entirely

entirely the inviſible Sultan as we do our viſible one, they would be as equal to theirs as we are to ours, and find no more to admire in theirs than we do in ours. And ſo would the Lord of the Heavens want Spirits about him, who would find nothing to admire in him! He would find them as tedious as a viſible Sultan his grandees, were they to be in ſuch a relation with him. I don't know to what all this tends. There is ſomething monſtrous in the thought, that this Being, to whom every thing is ſaid to owe its exiſtence and preſervation, ſhould ſit wrapped up in the dark, in full ſatisfaction and ſelf-enjoyment, and hide itſelf from us, while the ardent thirſt of our knowledge conſtantly prompts us to recognize it."

The Caliph. *Believe, children of the Prophet! when the inevitable day of judg-*

*judgment ſhall come, ſome will be lowered, others exalted. When the earth ſhall tremble at the dreadful ſhock, you will be ranged in three different claſſes: in thoſe at the right: (How happy will be thoſe at the right!)—in thoſe at the left (How miſerable will be thoſe at the left)!—and in thoſe who ſurpaſſed the reſt in belief. Theſe ſhall precede you in paradiſe. They ſhall be the next to God, and dwell in the gardens of delight. They ſhall repoſe themſelves facing each other, on beds decorated with gold and precious ſtones. Ever-blooming youths ſhall walk about them, attend them, and fill their cups with perfumed wine. This wine ſhall not oppreſs their head, nor confound their underſtanding. They ſhall preſent fruits to them, which they ſhall pick out, and the fleſh of the birds which they ſhall deſire. Virgins with large black eyes, white like the oſtrich's*

*oſtrich's egg, like the pearl hidden in its ſhell, ſhall be their companions, as a reward for their actions. There they ſhall hear no idle talk, no reproach of ſin, but only this ſalutation, Peace! Peace! Try, children of the Apoſtle, to exceed others in belief. And thoſe at the right (How happy are thoſe at the right!) —ſhall dwell under buſhes of the lote-tree without thorns, under acacia trees without thorns, always laden with their flowers from the foot to the top. Near ever-flowing waters, beneath wide and cooling ſhades, beneath never-failing fruits, which they may gather at pleaſure, ſhall they ſit and reſt upon high beds. Verily we have created the virgins of paradiſe, and moſchus is the ſtuff of which we have formed them. And we have created them virgins, that they may be loved by thoſe allied with them who ſhall be of the ſame age. And they ſhall*

*only look at him that is joined to them, and dwell in great and ſplendid tents. Believe me, Muſſulmen, this will be your lot!*

*Ben Haſi.* Mahal now ſaid to Ram: "Thou art the moſt deteſtable among them all."

*Ram.* Hold thy tongue; there are fools about me, and thou art not indeed the leaſt of them.

*The Caliph.* Done with this blaſphemy! I'll hear no more to-night; and let not that unbelieving Ram ſpeak in to-morrow's tale, elſe I ſhall be obliged to go from my word.

*Ben Haſi.* I have only to add a few more words. On quitting the hall of Reaſon, Mahal ſaid to Ram: "This day have I diſcovered among you the ſource of preſumption, of folly and corruption, which I ſo long have fought. It is KNOWLEDGE.

*Ram*

*Ram (ſmiling).* Always ſtick to it; it is a ſource that flows wide, ſtrong and copious, and on it thou mayeſt ſafely navigate for the diſcovery of all the reſt. But why do we poſſeſs it, with its inſtinct? The child that comes from its mother's womb, and ſees the light, already lays the firſt foundation for knowledge—Can the bantling help it?

*The Caliph.* Ben Hafi, peace be with thee!

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# THIRTEENTH EVENING.

*Ben Hafi.* SINCE your Highneſs feels averſe to hearing any farther the ſpeeches of the ſuppoſed philoſophical Sultan and his friends, I will not attempt to read to you the brilliant oration delivered by Ram in the hall of Light, which had for its conſequence Sultan Thinker's reſolution, to beat in pieces the wiſe and ſimple ſymbol of the Deity, expoſed from the remoteſt ages in a temple, and to ſubſtitute his own image in its place, that the Copts might have a ſenſible repreſentation

ſentation of might and power before their eyes.

The day fixed for the ſolemn inauguration of the Sultan's ſtatue was to be celebrated as a great feaſt throughout the empire of Copha.

The Sultan, attended by his philoſopher:, including Mahal, repaired to the temple. The penſive Copts had crowded the large edifice, when Sultan Thinker addreſſed them in a ſpeech on the Incomprehenſible and the ſymbol which was to ſenſualize him, and demonſtrated that all the ills which had hitherto deſolated his dominions originated from this ſenſeleſs uſage.

At the concluſion of this ſpeech the Sultan and his philoſophers laid each hold of an ax. The Sultan gave the firſt ſtroke, and the philoſophers followed him, till the image was beat

into a thouſand pieces. But ſuddenly a circumſtance occurred, at which the Sultan and his retinue were alike thunderſtruck.

The bird Phœnix, that riſes again from his aſhes, and is the image of the Muſſulman on the tremendous day of judgment, ſoared with his brilliant wings out of a large ball of bronze, which burſt with a terrible exploſion, and held a manuſcript in his beak. A voice at the ſame time reſounded: "This is the Koran, of which the generations now living ſhall never become worthy."

Gabriel, the prince of angels, had, dread Lord, hidden it in this ball by God's command; and it is a ſign to the faithful, that the Koran ſhall once rule the whole world. The Phœnix brought the holy book to the prince of angels, the prince of angels delivered

vered it to the Moſt Holy, and the Moſt Holy laid it down by his exalted throne, till mankind ſhould become worthy of it. Thouſands of years elapſed, Mahomet, the apoſtle whom God had choſen, appeared, and God ſent and revealed to him by his ſervant Gabriel the moſt ſacred of books.

The Caliph. *Praiſed be God Almighty! There is but one God, and Mahomet is his Prophet!*

*Ben Haſi.* Behold, Lord of Believers, this is the myſterious circumſtance to which I alluded in the beginning of the ſtory laſt night, when I aſſured your Highneſs that it would pleaſe you very much.

*The Caliph.* So it does; it is true, becauſe it is revealed. Thoſe atheiſts made me tremble with horror, but now I am comforted. I am ſatisfied

with thee, Ben Hafi: thou ſhalt never want at my court, and mayeſt now continue thy tale.

*Ben Hafi.* The penſive Copts cried with one voice: "A miracle!" The Sultan and his friends remained quite puzzled for many minutes, when Ram, taking courage, boldly exclaimed: "Why do you wonder at the groſs deception of the prieſts of this temple? It is they that have hidden this bird in the ball, and made it burſt by ſome artificial contrivance, to blind the people, to preſerve their lucrative trade of ſuperſtition, and to counteract the illumination of the Copts."

The Copts were obliged to believe. The ſtatue of the Sultan was then raiſed, and on its pedeſtal the laws of reaſon, or the formules, were engraven in golden characters. Thus was Mahal reſerved to witneſs the ſummit

ſummit of human madneſs and temerity. Fired with indignation, he returned with the court to the palace, and over a feſtive banquet took an opportunity to preach the vengeance of the Lord to the Sultan, which had however no other effect, than to make him the object of the jokes and deriſion of the company. From this moment, Sultan Thinker only conſidered him as the whetſtone of his wit, and for this reaſon alone ſuffered him to abide in his preſence.

The grave and capricious Copts, who were now to do nothing for fear of puniſhment or in hope of reward, laughed in their hearts at the ſymbol of a God who corporeally appeared before them, and who, in defiance of the laws of Reaſon, did ſo many things inconſiſtent with their rigid tenour. They talked a great deal of thoſe laws,

followed all the while the impreſſions of pleaſure and pain, but made ſuch keen and long reflections upon the motives of their actions and the purity of their will, that, had not hunger diverted their attention, the whole machine of the ſtate muſt ſoon have ſtood ſtill, and their teachers would have broken with their own hands the tables of thoſe laws, to prevent being totally cut off from all farther philoſophizing. Meanwhile thoſe thinkers did every thing to ſubvert the whole ſtructure of the ſtate; and to effect this, nothing more was required, than a rude blow from ſome unphiloſophical hand. The moſt ſenſible of the Copts went to ſettle in the dominions of Sultan Simple, to whom they gave ſuch a ſingular deſcription of his brother's government, that, partly from curioſity, partly from good-nature, he reſolved

to

to viſit Sultan Thinker's court, to ſee with his own eyes the miracles he wrought, and which drove ſo many of his ſubjects from his dominions. Attended by a few rough and uncultivated Mullahers, he arrived at Copha the very moment that his brother was ſitting with his philoſophical friends in the hall of Reaſon, and delivering a lecture to them on illumination and moral perfection. Sultan Simple went ſtraight forward to embrace his brother; but the latter, offended at the rude intruſion of his brother Simple and his barbarians into the hall of Reaſon, would not quit his chair, beckoned Simple to be ſeated, and continued his lecture. At its concluſion Sultan Simple ſaid with great cordiality: "Brother Thinker, I did not underſtand a word of all thou haſt been ſaying. By cultivation we Mullah-

ers underſtand nothing but the till-ing of our fields; by illumination we only mean the light of the good ſun; and if this fails, we light torches and candles. All we know of perfection is, to be in good health, to eat and drink as much as our ſtomachs will bear, and get as many children as we can. Reaſon we don't know, and leſs ſtill can we read that which thou ſayeſt is written in it. As for God, he is no more in Mullah; nor have we any image of him, ſuch as thou haſt expoſed in thy perſon. I long to ſee the curious thing, that makes ſo much noiſe abroad. In other reſpects, the Mullahers gladly obey me if I command what is juſt. If I command what is wrong or fooliſh, they boldly tell me of it, and don't obey; and as they are not at all afraid of death, I prefer ſticking to that which they think

think the beſt and the moſt prudent; and, methinks, they know much better, than myſelf, what is good or hurtful to them. I am now come hither, brother, to admire thee, to obſerve thy method of government, of which I comprehend nothing, and to learn ſomething from thee. Shew me the way, how I am to admire thee; and tell me, firſt of all: Whence happens it, that, notwithſtanding thy wiſdom and thy wonders, ſo many Copts come over to us rough Mullahers, and no Mullaher takes the trouble to ſettle among thy Copts?"

*The Caliph.* An arch queſtion for a ſimpleton, I'll warrant it! It was perhaps the cleverest ever aſked in this hall of Reaſon.

*Sultan Thinker.* Brother Simple, thou remaineſt the old idiot, quite born for the brutal people whom our father

father has given thee to govern, or rather to be governed by them. Rudeneſs and ſimplicity are a good match; for this reaſon thou hadſt done better to have kept at home, rather than ſhew thy ignorance before theſe ſages. But I will tell thee, why thy wild Mullahers do not tranſmigrate and ſettle among us.—Why do not the beaſts of the woods come to us?

*Sultan Simple.* Becauſe they are beaſts, and find themſelves very well where they are.

The whole philoſophical aſſembly laughed at this anſwer. Sultan Simple himſelf joined them in the roar, and at length ſaid: "Now I know why the beaſts of the woods don't come to you; 'tis becauſe they cannot laugh at you."

However innocently Simple uttered theſe words, his brother nevertheleſs felt the point of them, and gravely

retorted: "Brother Simple, the brutes do not come to us, becauſe they are incapable of reaſon; and the Mullahers don't ſettle among us, becauſe they are ſtill choked up with ignorance, and, like their brethren of the foreſt, only follow the inſtinct of the fleſh. My Copts go to dwell in thy dominions, becauſe, as enlightened men, they wiſh to ſpread the light I have kindled in them, as far as poſſible upon earth. But ſoon ſhalt thou experience the reſult; then thou wilt own, that thou art only capable to govern brutes, and not men."

*Sultan Simple.* If ſuch be the intention of thy Copts, I have plenty of time to return to Mullah, and ſend them about their buſineſs; but having till now ſhown themſelves very quiet, and relating as they do many fooliſh, ridicu-

ridiculous and miſchievous tricks of thee, I would fain believe that thy wiſdom made them run away, and not the intention of teaching animals, whoſe fortunate Sultan I call myſelf.

Theſe laſt words had ſo unpleaſant an effect upon Sultan Thinker, that he quickly broke up the meeting, and left his brother ſtanding alone in the hall, while he retired with his retinue and Mahal to his cloſet.

Sultan Simple ran all over the palace to ſeek his old acquaintances, but found none of them; for the philoſophers had turned out of their places, as uncultivated brutes, all the officers of the late Sultan. This grieved Simple to the heart. He went into a room full of manuſcripts, much ſurpriſed that his brother, whom he had come ſo far to viſit, could not

ſpare

ſpare an hour of his time to keep him company. He then fell aſleep, as happy as ſimplicity and innocence can be in all the different ſituations of life.

While Sultan Simple was ſoftly rocking in the arms of ſleep, his brother deliberated with his friends how to diſpoſe of the uncouth intruder. "This beaſt," exclaimed Sultan Thinker, with bitterneſs, "ought not to rule over men! It is a diſgrace to me, to reaſon, to humanity! As long as ſultans like him reign, it will be impoſſible for truth to diffuſe herſelf. My brother Beautifier, too, blaſts reaſon, and by his fancy makes his ſubjects a parcel of fools!"

*Ram.* Let then the philoſophers march and bring them illumination. Let us firſt go among the rude Mullahers, among whom, as thou ſayeſt, many

many of thy ſubjects are already gone for the ſame purpoſe.

*Sultan Thinker.* Ah, Ram! I did not like to tell Simple the truth of it. Thoſe fugitives are deſerters of Reaſon, who preſer ſtupidity to knowledge, becauſe they cannot act a ſhining part among us.

*Ram.* When I ſpeak to thee I ſpeak to a philoſopher, to a man, who, though a monarch, ſtill acknowledges another monarch above him, his clear, pure, and unprejudiced reaſon. Therefore the grandeſt and ſublimeſt taſk thou canſt undertake, is to make thy reaſon the ruler of all mankind. It would be raſhneſs and temerity to aſk if thou acknowledgeſt all this.

*Sultan Thinker.* So it would.

*Ram.* Then tell me: Doſt thou deem Simple capable of being enlightened?

*Sultan*

*Sultan Thinker.* Thou haſt heard proofs enough of it in the hall of Reaſon.

*Ram.* Then he has pronounced his own doom.

*All.* That he has!

Sultan Thinker here ſeriouſly began to pauſe.

*Ram.* If Simple be incapable of being enlightened, he never can be enlightened. If he, as chief of the Mullahers, can never be enlightened, knowledge cannot be transferred from him to the Mullahers, who will remain in ignorance. If they remain in ignorance, it is impoſſible thy light ſhould ſpread farther—and this—this is the moſt trifling part of the matter.

*Sultan Thinker (ſtarting).* What dareſt thou ſay?

*Ram.* Hem!—I ſay, that the rude, ſtupid

ſtupid and wild Mullahers may in courſe of time be very dangerous neighbours to thy refined, enlightened and penſive Copts. Knowledge is a very excellent thing for the mind, but not often for the body; frequently it grows at the expence of the ſtrength of the body: and if it ſhould come to blows between the Copts and Mullahers—

*Sultan Thinker.* Thou goeſt too far—The man of ſenſe triumphs always over animals, if not by the ſword, at leaſt by ſtratagem.

*Ram.* Which proves the weakneſs of the body. It is beſt not to let it come ſo far. Deprive the animal of his rude and dangerous ſtrength: ſo did our anceſtors with the horſe and the bull. Remember that the Mullahers have not forgotten that thy father ſubdued them by force.—To

all

all this I have only to add, that, as Sultan Simple will remain an animal over animals, and theſe animals are to be humanized, Sultan Simple cannot remain Sultan in Mullah.

*Sultan Thinker (ſmiling).* And who ſhould reign in his place?

*Ram.* Who elſe but the ſun that enlightens Copha? Is it not a duty incumbent on thee to ſubvert the irrational arrangements of thy father, and to place thyſelf gradually on the three thrones which he formerly occupied?

*Sultan Thinker.* All this is excellent; but—

*Ram.* I can ſee but one difficulty, which is inſupportable to any ſyſtematic thinker; for the firſt ſtep to form thoſe uncultivated Mullahers, would oblige thee to impreſs them with the idea of a God. Since thou

haſt taken this idea from the Copts, how canſt thou conſiſtendy—

*Sultan Thinker.* I never will do it; and why ſhould I?

*Ram.* Why, it is ſingular enough. The firſt ſtep of refinement you ſee is the idea of a God; and the laſt, that I mean which ſeals all illumination, is to reject him. I think we have demonſtrated this in Copha, and all we ſeek in Mullah is, that the Mullahers may become by art, and in proceſs of time, what they are by nature. We need no longer that idea, ſince it muſt not be the motive of our actions; for were it the motive of our actions, it would not be reaſon that excites us, but fear and hope, love or reſpect, which are reſolvable into the two former impure ones. There is nothing but bondage every where, and this we hate. But we will talk more largely

on this topic when we ſhall once be maſters of Mullah.

*Sultan Thinker.* And how ſhall we manage to accompliſh this purpoſe?

*Ram.* Nothing can be eaſier. Art thou not Simple's next heir by ſeniority? If I want to inherit of ſomebody, ſomething muſt firſt happen that can make me his heir. I will not utter the word, becauſe every enlightened man deteſts the idea of diſſolution. If thou really art the man thou ſeemeſt to be, thou mayeſt in this reſpect infringe the tables of the laws of Reaſon, and throw a veil over one of them. Beſides, an uſeleſs animal may alſo be ſhut up, and ſuffered to live according to its ſenſes, till it has worn them out.

*Sultan Thinker.* We ſhall conſider it. Certain it is, that Simple is in the

ſnare; and we ſhould be like him, were we to let him eſcape. Meanwhile, be friendly to him: I will invite him to a meeting to-morrow, and if he remain what he now is, we ſhall deliberate on other meaſures. At any rate, he will not do for a ſultan.

*Ram.* This is what I have proved.

At night they wheedled Sultan Simple, and occaſionally made him their ſcoff, as they did Mahal. Simple perceived nothing. In the morning an invitation was brought him to come to the hall of Wiſdom; but no Simple was to be found.

*The Caliph.* I am glad of it!

*Ben Haſi.* When Ram heard of his eſcape, he ſaid to Mahal, "Thou art the cauſe of Simple's eſcape; thou haſt betrayed our deſign to him."

*Mahal.* To be ſure, I have; nor do

do I care if I loſe my life for it, becauſe it is a burthen to me among you.

*Ram.* Still thou haſt heard us ſay, that we mean to inſtruct the Mullahers in the knowledge of God; thine is now the fault if they remain in ignorance.

*Mahal.* You are deteſtable, both with and without God.

*Ram.* How didſt thou manage it to appriſe him of our intention?

*Mahal.* By communicating it to one of his ſuite.

*Ram.* Say not a word of it to any body. Thou haſt done very well; and this made me ſpeak as I did in the preſence of the Sultan. I was confident of thy zeal's prompting thee to do as thou haſt done, and ſhould be very ſorry if any harm had befallen Simple.

*Mahal.* Who can comprehend thee, ſerpent?

*Ram.* Call me as thou pleaſeſt. I hate all theſe fools here, nor have I forgotten the whipping at Enoch. Be eaſy, thou ſhalt ſee much more, till thou art blind with ſeeing, and ſtupid with apprehenſion. Here thou art at the ſource of wiſdom, and in proportion as thou draweſt from it, thou wilt become either a fool, an empty nothing, or a villain: as to the former, thou needeſt not become it.

*Mahal.* If I am grown a fool, it has been with you; but before any ſuch thing takes place, I'll back to my mountain, and there weep over you till I am dead.

*Ram.* Only look what a fool thou art! But never mind, and follow my counſel: ſince thou art a crying and not a laughing fool, I will become

thy

thy benefactor, by ſupplying thee with ſubjects for crying. I ſhall find means faſt enough to help thee back to the mountain.

After this dialogue Ram and Mahal went to Sultan Thinker, whom they found among his friends, quite enraged at his brother's eſcape. Ram plainly told him there muſt be a traitor among the philoſophers, becauſe Simple was too ſtupid to have gueſſed ſuch a deſign. "But be eaſy, Sultan," continued he, "if he went to thy brother Beautifier, he will not fare much better."

*Sultan Thinker.* I will immediately write to my brother Beautifier, and invite him to join in a league with me againſt him: the hope which my ambaſſador ſhall give him to make Beautifiers of all the people of Mullah, will immediately kindle his fancy.

If we ſhall once have brought it ſo far as to be able to divide Mullah, we ſhould be no philoſophers if we could not ſubject Sullah likewiſe to the ſway of reaſon. My ambaſſador ſhall alſo tell him how groſsly Simple has inſulted me, by evading my invitation to the hall of Wiſdom.

Sultan Thinker was not miſtaken in his conjectures. Simple went ſtraight to Sultan Beautifier, and complained of the deſign of his brother. But he got no redreſs: on the contrary, Beautifier held a council, to deliberate how to make the Mullahers truly poetical, and ſuſceptible of the ſublime and beautiful. But the ſame fortune which ſo often protects ſimplicity, alſo ſaved Sultan Simple here. How it happened, Mahal does not relate, as he did not witneſs it.

Sultan Thinker's meſſage made how-

however a ſtrong impreſſion upon Sultan Beautifier. He ſaw himſelf ſuddenly in the luſtre of a hero, and the Beautifiers found in his and their intended exploits a ſublime ſubject for poetry, and in the ſtrong and induſtrious Mullahers a new and rich ſource to feed their poetic veins and bodies. The war againſt Mullah was therefore undertaken with all the enthuſiaſm peculiar to poets and beautifiers. The Sultan ſent a proclamation in fiery and high-ſounding expreſſions among the Sullahers; it ſpread fire and flames of fancy, and every body roſe to make beautifiers of the animals of Mullah.

Sultan Simple, on his return to Mullah, related to his elders with tears, how his brothers had projected to murder him, in order to ſubjugate the Mullahers and make thinkers

and

and beautifiers of them. Seized with an inſtantaneous paroxyſm of rage, all the Mullahers ſwore by the Earth, their ſupporter, to break the pates of the Copts and Sullahers for brooding ſuch wickedneſs, and to avenge their late ſubjugation.

Simple was very ſorry matters ſhould be brought to ſuch extremes: but as much could be done with, and little ſaid to, the Mullahers, he put himſelf at their head. Armed with clubs and ſwords, they advanced in compact bodies to the frontiers of Copha. A terrible army! Lord of Believers, ſince the Mullahers did not fear death, and knew no more of valour, than that man could not well do without it.

The two auguſt and conſederate brothers had in the mean time formed a congreſs, and ſo agreed with each other

other as fancy commonly does with reaſon. They felt themſelves quite lonely in each other's company, entertained a reciprocal contempt for their reſpective uſages, and did all they could to make this contempt degenerate into hatred, which however they prudently took care not to let break out, till one ſhould be able to do without the other. Thinker thought of uſing the Sullahers to conquer the Mullahers, and then make the Mullahers his tools to enſlave the Sullahers. Sultan Beautifier had the ſame views with reſpect to the Copts: and thus they acted very prettily the game of confederates and allies; and it may be expected that the iſſue of the cauſe will be ſuch as it generally is among the allied Great.

While the monarchs and chiefs were meditating theſe ſuperb plans, the

the penſive Copts ſo long debated upon the noble contempt of death, and pure heroiſm, its true ſource, till they ultimately diſcovered, that it was very inconſiſtent with reaſon for a man to ſuffer himſelf to be killed for a fool. Theſe ſage obſervations received additional weight, by ſeveral heads broken by the clubs of the Mullahers: and the Copts found, at this horrid ſpectacle, that thoſe clubs daſhed at once to atoms all the tables of morality, by daſhing out along with them legiſlative Reaſon. The Beautifiers ſung their intended exploits, and celebrated ſo long the fame of heroiſm and the ſublime horrors of war, till ſimilar mementos convinced them, that one rude blow would put an end to the play of fancy, and to all the ſenſations of the beautiful and ſublime; and that a

man

man muſt be a fool thus to ceaſe being a beautifier.

The day of battle was come: Sultans Thinker and Beautifier were addreſſing their armies in harangues full of profound reaſoning and ſublimity. The armies were advancing; that of Beautifier with martial muſic, and that of Thinker with ſolemn ſtillneſs. When the Mullahers could ſee the white of their enemies' eyes, they lifted their maſſy clubs, and brandiſhed their ſwords, while the Copts and the Sullahers quietly ſat down on their ſhields, and called out to the Mullahers, " You need not give yourſelves any farther trouble to conquer us; the ſentiment of the beautiful, and the laws of reaſon, make us your friends; and you may now take the two fools who have brought us hither.

Let

Let Simple be our Sultan, and bury all animoſities in eternal oblivion."

Ram, aſſiſted by ſome Philoſophers and Beautifiers, ſecured the two Sultans, and ſurrendered them to Simple, who embraced them, and wept bitterly. Ram ſaid to him, "Weep as much as thou likeſt, but do not forget thou art Sultan, and what treatment thy brothers had reſerved for thee."

"They are my brothers," replied Simple, "and why ſhould I not weep? Alas! I cannot hurt them!"

*Ram.* That you need not. Shut them up together, and they will torment one another enough, to rid thee very ſoon of the trouble of keeping them.

The Copts and Sullahers were ſatisfied,

tisfied, and proclaimed Sultan Simple monarch of the three empires, ſaying to themſelves, "We have been fools under fools; Simple will reſtore us again to common ſenſe."

The Copts and Sullahers marched home, and Ram and Mahal accompanied Sultan Simple to Mullah.

Here Ben Hafi rolled up his record for the evening.

*The Caliph.* This was a wicked, deteſtable tale! I am glad it is over. I am alſo glad that Simple got off ſo well. I hope he will be a good Sultan, becauſe a ſimple prince is always better than one who is too knowing.

*The Grand Vizier.* This is the beſt tale I ever heard; and Simple was an excellent Sultan: for the ſimple man who ſuffers himſelf to be led by the wiſe,

wiſe, is better than the wiſe who truſts only to himſelf, and lacks experience and knowledge of mankind.

FOUR-

## FOURTEENTH AND LAST EVENING.

BEN HAFI preſented himſelf in due time, and thus began the concluſion of his narrative:

Mahal now had an ample ſubject for meditation. Ram was to him a tormenting riddle; and when he aſked him any queſtions with a view of ſolving it, all the anſwer he could obtain was a contemptuous ſmile. The Mullahers ſurpriſed him ſtill more, though he exactly found them ſuch as Ram and their own ſultan had deſcribed them. The whole country

was like a well-cultivated garden; contentment reigned in the cities and fields. The rough Mullaher, who ſaid nothing without doing it, and did nothing without ſaying it, appeared to him the beſt kind of man of any nation he had ſeen during his travels. They lived for the ſake of living, without knowing whence they came, and whither they ſhould go. To them ſun and moon were nothing but lights, the earth their ſupporter, heaven the reſervoir of the water which was to moiſten their fields. "What a pity," ſaid Mahal, "that ſo good a people ſhould not believe in God, nor know any thing of him! How ſtrange, that thoſe who do not believe in God, ſhould juſt be the beſt men I met with!" He ſecretly reſolved to make the Mullahers acquainted with the Lord.

The

The Mullahers heard him, and replied, " Stranger, the earth is our God; it ſupports the induſtrious, and leaves the lazy to ſtarve." Mahal would not ſuffer this ſimple anſwer to damp his zeal for converting them; but Ram, who had been raiſed to the office of Grand Vizier, ſent for his friend, and thus addreſſed him:

" Mahal, I am informed thou art preaching God to the Mullahers; pray let it alone, elſe I ſhall be under the neceſſity of ſending thee packing with a ſound fuſtigation for a keepſake. The Mullahers are animals, and good animals. What can become of men, when they ceaſe to be that, thou haſt ſufficiently ſeen and experienced. As far as I perceive, thou art ſtill ſearching for the cauſe why men are what they are: and, in my opinion, thou wilt never find it.

Therefore, my good friend, I think it high time for thee to return to the mountain, and relate to God what thou haſt ſeen, heard, and experienced. He will collect from thy report, that we are a very pretty ſort of people, and that Ram is not the ſillieſt among us. That which thou haſt ſeen me do and execute, was a manœuvre which I played with theſe Sultans, and it will convince thee, that I have not forgotten the whipping I ſuffered by order of thy ſon-in law at Enoch. Now I mean to make a very ſingular thing of Simple, if God will give me time for it: if he do not, it will be a thouſand pities. God will ſurely not wonder, when thou telleſt him thou couldſt not diſcover the cauſe why we are as we are; we don't know it ourſelves: and ſhould he entruſt thee with his ſecret, return hither and impart it

to

to us. But I much doubt it, and it ſeems to me to be really the grand political ſecret of Heaven —I, the Grand Vizier of the great and ſublime Sultan Simple, will give thee an eſcort who are to conduct thee as far as the mountain; and if thou doſt not play ſome of thy ſtupid tricks, thou wilt arrive there in good caſe. I ſhould be ſorry if any accident were to happen to thee, as God would loſe very much by it. Now, fare thee well! Travelling has made thee a little more experienced, but what thou ſoughteſt thou haſt not found! Such is the caſe with us all in our wanderings through this perplexing world!"

Mahal's indignation roſe to the higheſt pitch at this audacious ſpeech; but Ram only laughed at his ſcorn. The man of the mountain left the new Grand Vizier, loading him with

imprecations for having prevented him from converting the Mullahers. Ram ludicrouſly told him at parting: "My greeting to Pooh, and to Noah thy brother-in-law."

Thus Mahal ſet out on his return to the old mountain, aſhamed of having taken that for wiſdom which he had found, ſhocked at all mankind, and murmuring againſt God, before whom he was now to appear the living teſtimony of the wickedneſs and degeneracy of thoſe whoſe deſtruction was reſolved upon. At the ſame time, the bold diſputes of the philoſophers had made ſome impreſſion upon him, or confirmed him at leaſt in his ſceptic ſtubbornneſs.

On his way back he found the Sultan dwarf very happy among his Gomers, and the Sultan of Gin ſtill thinking it prudent to ſubmit his ſuperior under-

underſtanding to the controul of the gods who ſurrounded his throne. Mahal thought it expedient to make a ſilent and quiet retreat through the dominions of thoſe two Sultans. At Irad he was informed, that Zobar died ſuddenly by the burſting of a blood-veſſel, in a fit of paſſion becauſe his vizier and treaſurer had pilfered from him too great a ſhare of his houſehold-god. Mahal's daughter Milka had ſucceeded him in the government, and the courtier of Enoch and paramour of his adulterous daughter was her Grand Vizier. What ſurpriſed Mahal moſt was, that the little baſtard ſprung from that infamous connection was to ſucceed his faithleſs mother on the throne. He found Pooh, with wonted pride, at the old taſkmaſter's, ſtill employed as a beaſt of burden, and vainly conſoling himſelf with the

idea, that his ſuppoſed ſon would one day propagate the divine lineage of Gedim, and rule over both empires. The artful Milka, who had now become a goddeſs, durſt not reſcue her poor injured huſband from his bondage, becauſe he would not abdicate his godſhip. Mahal's feelings revolted at the perverſeneſs of his daughter. He waited upon her to chide her for her profligacy; when ſhe thus interrupted him: "Father, thou haſt brought me among fools; and ſince I am and muſt be among them, I am what I ought to be to them—a cunning fool. Thou hadſt beſt make no long ſtay at Irad, becauſe the people are not thy friends."

She left him, and not even his tears could move her. He went away half broken-hearted; and having reached the foot of the old mountain, his eſcort took leave, and withdrew.

Mahal

Mahal aſcended the mountain, and haſtened to the ſpot where the Lord had ſpoken to him. He brought nothing with him but this record, which he had laſhed over his breaſt, while his heart was trembling and palpitating under it.

He ſat down on a ſtone, beneath a cedar-tree, and, agreeably to the divine command, peruſed with ſighs and murmurs the whole of his manuſcript; after which he exclaimed: "Lord! Here I am, an unhappy fool, tired of life, confounded and overwhelmed with what I have ſeen!"

The mountain-breeze gently ruſtled among the leaves of the cedar, and the voice of the Lord reſounded:

"Man that covetedſt the wiſdom of thy fellows, what haſt thou gained by it?"

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*Mahal.* Forgive me, Lord, if I ſpeak from the impulſe of my ſorrowful heart. My gain is, to be weary of exiſtence, to hate myſelf, and all mankind in me. Deſtroy them all (they are ripe for deſtruction), and include me among them. But never create again their like, leſt thou repent it a ſecond time.

*The Lord.* Haſt thou found no nation, no generation, that might deſerve my mercy?

*Mahal.* One nation only I found better than the reſt; but this nation has quite forgotten thee, knows nothing of thy name, and lives like the beaſt of the foreſt. So great is their ignorance, that if thou deſtroy them with the others, they won't even believe they deſerve their fate. Ah! Lord, forgive my folly: why does it

repent

repent thee to have made men, and why haſt thou made them as I found them?

*The Lord.* What I have created, I have created; and I have created it ſuch as it is. Having created all, I ſaid, 'It is good!' and it was good. Man was the beſt after the ſpirits of Heaven formed by my hand, and I animated him with my ſpirit in preference to all the creatures of the earth. He was the beſt, only becauſe he could become the worſt of the created, and apply to good or to bad every thing attainable to him in my creation.

*Mahal.* Ah, Lord! I don't underſtand thee.

*The Lord.* Becauſe thy ſenſes are hardened, and thy heart is fooliſh!— Thou haſt now ſeen men, but haſt thou

thou diſcovered too, why they are ſo bad, and why thou art a fool?

*Mahal.* I know I was a fool to leave this mountain; but I was obliged to quit it, becauſe the reſtleſs deſire of knowledge and underſtanding was ſtronger than the reaſon or ſpirit which thou haſt allotted to my clay-made body. Can I help it, that Adam, the father of us all, taſted the fruit of knowledge, and propagated in us the ardent inſtinct of knowledge, beſides the diſcernment of good and evil? I have written down all I heard, ſaw and felt. I have ſeen and experienced in myſelf, that men are bad and preſumptuous. None of them knows thee, and thoſe to whom I mentioned thy name, laughed at me and railed. I ſought after the ſource of the evil in their fleſh and in their ſpirit, and ſtill

muſt aſk: Lord, why does the fleſh rule the ſpirit? Why does the evil of the fleſh tranſmit itſelf to the ſpirit? Why muſt the ſpirit, which comes from thee, and is a part of thyſelf as thou breathedſt it into man—why muſt this ſpirit depend upon the fleſh, made of clay and doomed to putrefaction in the earth? How can man accompliſh two ſuch contradictory things, to live in the ſpirit and in the fleſh? Surely, Lord, thou muſt know all this, and thou haſt created every thing good. All I know is, that thou haſt created the whole, and that all comes from thee. I want ſenſe to comprehend the end, the key of the dark myſtery from which I ſhrink trembling. Thou haſt this key, and I dare not aſk it of thee, for thou entruſteſt no man with thy ſecret. Nothing there-

fore

fore remains for me, but to proſtrate myſelf in the duſt from which thou haſt drawn me, to weep over myſelf and all mankind, whom thou haſt created, and of whoſe creation it repenteth thee, and then to die.

*The Lord.* Behold, thus I rear mankind to the ſublime end which I have choſen! This is the firſt ſtep of their infancy. I will deſtroy this generation that now fills the earth with horrors, that has forgotten my name, or miſuſes and blaſphemes it. I will extirpate them all; and to the future generations I will ſend ſages, prophets and apoſtles, reveal myſelf unto them, and rear the child to manhood.

*The Caliph (to himſelf).* The Lord means Abraham, Moſes, Chriſt, and our ſublime Prophet.

*Mabal.* But what have theſe done

to be born ſooner, and to commit ſin ſooner? How can they help having ſprung up in mankind's infancy, and having neither ſages nor prophets nor apoſtles to reveal thee to them?

*The Lord.* I was your prophet and your apoſtle, and came among you to be your teacher. I ſpoke to thee, and to all men living, the plain and ſtrong language of my fatherly exiſtence and care. My revelation ſtands living around you, in grand, ſublime and plain characters. You will not ſee it, nor hear my voice, though I appear in lightning and ſpeak in thunder. Now I muſt leave men to their obduracy; for I am a tender father, and no tormenting compeller. Therefore I ſpake to theſe generations like a fond father to his darling children. The future generations ſhall only learn to know me and my will by the voice of man: they

they ſhall gueſs and believe what you have ſeen with your eyes.

*Mabal.* Lord, forgive the blindneſs of my ſpirit, and the doubts of my heart! Behold, I cannot ſuppreſs bad thoughts, and thou juſtly calleſt me obdurate. If the men I have ſeen be ſtill in their infancy, I ſhould like to ſee thoſe that are to attain the age and maturity of manhood. What can be expected of ſuch children? I have ſeen nothing but what is bad. Thoughts and deeds of horror are their buſineſs! Man ſcorns thee, works only for himſelf and his pleaſures, and thinks the whole world, his brethren, and thyſelf, are only for his ſake. Men delight in bloodſhed and deſtruction: their glory is wickedneſs, and the extirpation of their own kind, of the earth, of its dwellings, and of the nouriſhing fields. Wretched men govern

theſe

theſe fools, and call themſelves gods; and their ſubjects not only take them as ſuch, but creep in the duſt, and ſuffer themſelves to be ſlaughtered for their pride. Why muſt man, whoſe Lord thou art, whom thou haſt created, humble himſelf and grovel under his equals?

*The Lord.* Such is the climax of their delirium, which could not but ſeize them the moment they forſook me. I wanted their leaders to be ſhepherds, and they themſelves made robbers of them!

*Mabal.* Why, good Lord, ſhould this happen? Why were thoſe permitted to be thus rampant before theſe?—They worſhip gold, and take it for their God. Why haſt thou created gold? Why haſt thou made things in general?

*The Lord.* Thus, fool, mighteſt thou as well aſk, why I made thee.

*Mahal.* Lord, have pity on my poor reaſon! A fool I am; but I muſt aſk thee, why?

*The Lord.* Thou ſhalt have no anſwer.

*Mahal.* Alas! Is this our fate?—Let me me then deplore mankind at the age of the ſuckling and of the hoary ſire! Let me expire aſking: Why haſt thou made them ſo?

*The Lord.* I ſhut my ear to the obdurate! With thine eyes open thou wilt not ſee, with thy hands thou wilt not feel, nor attend to the ſpirit whom I have ſet guardian over thy heart.

*Mahal.* Lord, I perceive, and upbraid myſelf with, my folly! Yet my darkneſs is not diſpelled. Why, Lord, did thy lightning ſtrike dead my only benefactor, the poor fiſherman?

*The*

*The Lord.* This thou ſhalt know. My lightning ſtruck him dead, becauſe, while ye ſlept, he was meditating how he ſhould kill thee and thy companion, for the ſake of getting what little ye had about you. Often do I puniſh where I ſeem to reward, often reward where I ſeem to puniſh.

*The Caliph.* God is juſt!

*Ben Haſi.* So Mahal experienced at this moment. The Lord continued: "Thou art ſenſible of my juſtice, and ſtill thy ſpirit ſays: 'Why was my companion ſpared, he who had done ſo many evil deeds?' Thy heart is obdurate and incurable. I do not force my light upon mortals, that they may rejoice in and become worthy of it. The life of theſe generations ſhall forthwith be cut off. I will pour floods of water all over the earth; and

all that is created ſhall periſh, with the animals and the creeping things. Only my ſervant Noah and his family ſhall ſurvive and be ſaved in the ark which I bade him build.

*Mabal.* Be not wroth, Lord, againſt me. I want no birth in this ark; for I can live no more with the good and innocent, and with the wicked and depraved I will not tarry.

*The Lord.* This, and the doubts which plague thee, are the reward of fools who ſeek wiſdom among men, and not in me. Thou ſhalt not ſurvive this generation. Hide deep beneath yon rock the writing in which thou haſt ſet down the madneſs of mortal men. Be this rock thy couch; the Flood ſhall ſpare it, and thy writing ſhall not be waſhed away. Be this ſtone thy ſeat, and this

this cedar thy cover, till I ſhall take thy unquiet ſpirit from thee. The birds of the air ſhall feed thee, for I am merciful even unto fools, and ſupport them. Weep over thy folly, and that of mankind, which thou ſo much deſiredſt, and againſt which my ſervant Noah warned thee. None of the children of Seth, not even Noah my ſon, ſhall approach thee, leſt thou ſhouldſt poiſon their ſimplicity. A fool thou departedſt hence, and a greater fool art thou returned: ſuch is the fruit of human knowledge, which only turns poiſon to him that attempts to diſcover what I conceal.

Here the Lord diſappeared.

Mahal fell down and worſhipped, but his heart was obdurate; he wanted to ſearch and to know, and would not acknowledge the law of reſignation to God's will, by which we bear

our fate. He remained on the rock bewailing his and mankind's folly, their crimes and preſumption. His ſpirit fled from him, and his body was petrified, and became a laſting monument on the rock; and, though a ſtone, he ſtill appears to deplore the poſterity of Noah, which lives and ſins on earth.

Thus, Lord of Believers, have terminated the travels of Mahal before the Flood. If their recital has afforded thee entertainment, poor Ben Hafi is ſufficiently rewarded. I have omitted the account of many individual crimes and oppreſſions, that I might ſpare thy humane heart.

*The Caliph.* Thou haſt done well; and it were better if we could forget all the bad men commit, and tranſmit only their good deeds to poſterity. I have myſelf almoſt forgotten all thy tales,

tales, and nothing but the ball of bronze which contained the Koran before the Flood, remains freſh in my memory. Thou art a good man, and ſhalt remain in my palace for life. Write out this important hiſtory, and it will convince all believers and unbelievers, that we are the choſen people of God.

*Ben Hafi.* I thank thee, Succeſſor of the Prophet, for thy kindneſs, and will ſtudy always to deſerve it.

*The Caliph.* There muſt be ſomething more in thy ſtory than I have found in it. And I will attend to the ſalutary leſſons I may find in it, after it ſhall be tranſcribed. God give me ſtrength and wiſdom to make the beſt reforms for the benefit of my ſubjects!

*Ben Hafi.* Permit thy ſervant to join a prayer to thine.

*The*

*The Caliph.* Thou committeſt a ſin by addreſſing ſuch a requeſt to me. The Caliph is not greater before Him to whom we pray, than thou; and the prayers of the poor will be heard ſooner.

Ben Hafi now laid his hands acroſs his breaſt, bent his knees, and thus prayed with a loud voice:

"Lord! Let my name be the terror of all wicked, unjuſt and hard-hearted viziers and miniſters, who ſhut their ears to the cries of injured and oppreſſed humanity. Convince ſultans and princes, that they have no better friends than thoſe who poſſeſs ſpirit and courage to ſpeak the truth. They ſing the praiſe of good monarchs, and expoſe to deſerved diſgrace the weakneſs and folly of thoſe who do not reſemble them!"

*The Caliph.* Thy prayer be heard!

Here

Here the Caliph withdrew with Ben Hafi; and the Grand Vizier, who remained quite confounded, thus addreſſed the courtiers:

" All evil ſprings from the wickedneſs which has taken root in the hearts of men; they ought to be governed with a rod of iron, and flogged into ſubmiſſion. If I preſerve my charge a few weeks longer, I will convince the Caliph of what I ſay, and unmaſk this traitorous and dangerous Ben Hafi, who meditates my ruin in his Highneſs's favour."

FINIS.